



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 15, 2021

Utah Governor Signs Bill Allowing Gun Owners to Conceal Carry Firearms Without a Permit

While Second Amendment rights are under attack in Washington, D.C., the State of Utah is sending a message to would-be federal gun grabbers. On Friday, new Governor Spencer Cox signed legislation that will allow Utah residents 21 year-of-age and older to carry a concealed firearm without any permit.

The new law, referred to as “constitutional carry” by many, will go into effect in May and will allow gun owners to carry concealed guns without an FBI background check and without a training course of any kind.



Photo: Kameleon007/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Previously, Utah had required gun owners to take a weapons course, undergo a federal background check, and obtain a permit to carry a concealed firearm. This law effectively does away with those infringements. However, the state will continue to operate the current Concealed Firearm Permit system so that those who wish to obtain a permit may still do so.

“With the passage of this bill, Utah joins 17 other states with some form of permitless concealed carry,” the Republican Cox said in a statement. “This bill protects Second Amendment rights, reduces permitless open carry (which is already legal), and includes significant funding for suicide prevention.”

[H.B. 60](#), sponsored by State Representative Walt Brooks, a Republican from St. George, states that “an individual who is 21 years or older, and may lawfully possess a firearm, may carry a concealed firearm in a public area without a permit.”

Former governor Gary Herbert, a Republican, chose to [veto](#) a similar bill back in 2013, claiming that Utah’s existing concealed carry law was a model of what the rest of the nation should follow.

Utah issued over 26,000 concealed carry permits in the last quarter of 2020 and renewed over 18,000 more by the end of the year. As of December 31, 2020, the state reported over 718,000 valid concealed carry permits with the majority of them being for non-residents.

A large portion of those funds paid for those permits will be transferred to the new Suicide Prevention and Education Fund outlined in the bill.

Gun advocacy groups hailed the signing as a victory for Second Amendment rights.

“There is no reason a law-abiding person should have to ask for permission to carry a firearm for self-defense,” said Jason Ouimet of the National Rifle Association. “The passage of this bill demonstrates Utah’s commitment to protecting the Second Amendment rights of its citizens.”

Others have said that the permitting process needlessly adds another layer to public safety. “Criminals have guns, and they’re going to conceal and do with them what they do,” said State Senator David



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Hinkins (R-Orangeville). “All this does is (for) law-abiding citizens, this allows a woman to put it in her purse or a man to put it in his jacket.”

But of course, there was opposition to the legislation. Moms Demand Action, an anti-gun group, issued a [statement](#) blasting the bill earlier this month, after it passed legislative hurdles in the state House and Senate.

“Clearly our lawmakers’ ties to the gun lobby mean more to them than their constituents,” said Mary Ann Thompson of Moms Demand Action. “It’s unacceptable that our lawmakers passed a bill to gut suicide prevention training when nearly 85 percent of Utah’s gun deaths are suicides. Governor Cox should follow in the footsteps of his predecessor and immediately veto this bill.”

The Utah Gun and Violence Center, another anti-Second Amendment group, claimed that the new law was bad news, especially for people of color: “More loaded and concealed guns means that every police officer will need to assume a person is carrying a loaded firearm. How do you think that will work out for our black and brown Utah residents,” the group said in a message urging Cox to veto the bill.

The new Utah legislation is a good reminder that much of the important work being done in service of the U.S. Constitution is actually being done at the state and local level. That is always the case, of course but, especially in these times. In Washington, Joe Biden and congressional Democrats and Republicans are busy infringing on freedoms left and right — [gun freedoms included](#). It’s good to remember that not all of the power lies in Washington, D.C.



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