

Jeff Hopton's Testimony

May 1, 2019

Constitutional carry used to be known as Vermont carry. Vermont as a state never restricted the carry of firearms by any adult. It was ruled by the State Supreme court that the State's constitution did not allow restrictions, including licensing schemes. Vermont had essentially been a Constitutional carry state since before the United State's existed.

Defining Constitutional Carry

Constitutional Carry is by definition the ability to carry a firearm without a restriction in place by the Government. In a Constitutional Carry State, there is no licensing or training required to legally carry a firearm. Some states with unlicensed carry have implemented certain policies that restrict the method of carry or who can carry. Some require you to be 21, others require you to be a resident of that state, and others only allow concealed or open carry.

Isn't it Dangerous?

It may seem somewhat odd that there is no government required training to carry a weapon, and I can understand why some will see this as dangerous. However, in the States that have adopted Constitutional carry, there hasn't been an increase in violence or firearms accidents. Vermont is one of the safest states in the Union. There are a few reasons to this.

First off people are still seeking training to know how to use a firearm in Constitutional Carry states. There are more firearms training schools now than ever. I'm a certified instructor in my home state and I am a proponent for unrestricted carry. I know, even if it's not required, people will still come to me for training. Serious concealed carriers with either seek training out or train themselves. Guns aren't so complicated that a person couldn't learn to carry successfully by themselves.

People who carry every day take responsibility for themselves and are likely responsible people. It takes real dedication to carry every single day. Those who don't take their responsibility to defend themselves seriously are unlikely to carry a firearm, even infrequently.

Benefits of Constitutional Carry

Concealed carry laws have never stopped a criminal from carrying without a license. All it does is prevent law abiding citizens from carrying a firearm. Concealed carry licensing systems can easily prevent people from carrying a firearm to protect themselves. They also leave people vulnerable during the often long process applying and being approved.

The often high costs prevent lower income individuals from obtaining permits. In my state, it costs 112 dollars just for the license. There is also a required class which can cost anywhere from 50 to 150 dollars. The license requires someone to find at least two days to take the class and apply for the license. For some lower-income individuals and families, it would be nearly impossible to miss two days of work. When you take into account that lower income families are more likely to be the victims of a violent crime this is even more insane. The wait can then be up to 90 days while they process the application and mail out the card.

As Doctor King said, "A right delayed is a right denied."

Constitutional carry makes it possible for hard-working, low-income individuals to protect themselves without undue burden.

Constitutional carry would also reduce government bureaucracy and trim government spending on licensing agencies.

More people would carry firearms, which often results in a lower violent crime rate. In the last decade concealed carry permits have tripled, and in that same time the murder rate has dipped to the lowest it's been since 1993.

Constitutional carry takes the right to bear arms and returns it to the status of a right. If you need to be permitted to carry a gun it's a privilege and not a right.

Successful Transitions

Ten states have adopted Constitutional Carry and none of them have had any increase in gun violence or a higher rate of accidents involving firearms. I imagine and hope Constitutional carry will spread like concealed carry did throughout the 1990s. Over time people will accept it as a right, and that a permit will not prevent crime. Hopefully, the Constitution will once again be the Supreme Law of the Land, and carrying a gun won't require permission.

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ARMED RESISTANCE TO CRIME: THE

PREVALENCE AND NATURE OF SELFDEFENSE WITH A GUN*

GARY KLECK MARC GERTZ

Americans use guns for self-protection as often as 2.1 to 2.5 million times a

year? The estimate may seem remarkable in comparison to expectations based on conventional wisdom, but it is not implausibly large in comparison to various gun-related phenomena. There are probably over 220 million guns in private hands in the U.S.,⁵⁷ implying that only about 1% of them are used for defensive purposes in any one year-not an impossibly high fraction. In a December 1993 Gallup survey, 49% of U.S. households reported owning a gun, and 31% of adults reported personally owning one.⁵⁸ These figures indicate that there are about 47.6 million households with a gun, with perhaps 93 million, or 49% of the adult U.S. population living in households with guns, and about 59.1 million adults personally owning a gun. Again, it hardly seems implausible that 3% (2.5 million/93 million) of the people with immediate access to a gun could have used one defensively in a given year.