



Senate Bill 208 Sponsor Testimony

Senator Lou Terhar
Senate Judiciary Committee
November 9, 2017

Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 208.

Senate Bill 208 allows an off-duty police officer or BCI investigator to carry a weapon in establishments and venues open to the public. This includes hotels, restaurants, retail stores, office buildings, sports venues, and amusement parks. Only officers and investigators who carry in the line of duty are permitted under this bill to carry while off-duty.

The federal law known as the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act permits off-duty officers to carry in such venues as long as state law does not prohibit them from doing so, and this bill will give our off-duty officers that freedom.

The purpose of this bill is to enhance the safety of these public places and provide for a faster response in the case of an active shooter situation. We have seen an unfortunate increase in mass shootings across the nation, and this bill provides for well-trained individuals to respond to these types of incidents. Examples of situations we hope to prevent under this proposal include the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando in 2016 and a similar incident in Paris at the Bataclan Theater in 2015. If we rely on police to protect us when on duty, then we should extend that commitment to those same officers when off-duty, and still in a position to protect and serve.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 208. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.