



To: Pennsylvania State House of Representatives
From: Adam Garber, CeaseFire Pennsylvania Executive Director
RE: Vote No on Senate Bill 565, Permitless Concealed Carry

November 15, 2021

Dear Representative,

The Pennsylvania State Senate is expected to soon consider legislation (Senate Bill 565, Dush) that would allow any Pennsylvanian to carry a concealed, loaded firearm in public without a permit. **The PA Police Chiefs Association and PA District Attorneys Association oppose this policy because they know the danger of removing existing safeguards that allow law enforcement to ensure concealed firearm carriers act in a manner that does not endanger public safety.** CeaseFirePA, the state's leading gun violence prevention advocacy organization, urges you to vote no on Senate Bill 565 (Dush), which would limit law enforcement's ability to de-escalate dangerous and potentially deadly situations. We also urge you to support a series of amendments which are detailed below.

Experiences in other states make it clear that repealing this safeguard will make Pennsylvanians less safe. Under existing law, law enforcement can run more extensive background checks and evaluate the character and reputation of concealed carry applicants. This can include looking at whether they are involved in potential criminal activity, whether or not they have a disqualifying felony on the record, or if they have other concerning indicators such as domestic violence or substance abuse. **Arizona experienced a 44% increase in aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in the six years after enacting permitless carry in 2010.**¹

The legislation would also lower the age for concealed carry from 21 to 18, posing additional risk for suicide and violence. After Missouri lowered the minimum age to 19 for concealed carry, firearm suicide increased 7.2% among people aged 19 to 24.²

Additionally, the current concealed carry permit process does not in any way inhibit the rights of Pennsylvanians whom law enforcement deem able to responsibly carry a concealed weapon. In 2020, Sheriff's departments and the City of Philadelphia issued 311,000 concealed carry permits -- a 25% increase from the previous year.³ Franklin County, for instance, saw a 42% increase in permit

¹ Concealed carry reciprocity: overriding state public safety laws. Everytown Research and Policy. 2018 <https://everytownresearch.org/report/concealed-carry-reciprocity-overriding-state-public-safety-laws/>

² Apurva Bhatt, et al. Association of changes in Missouri firearm laws with adolescent and young adult suicides by firearms. 2020 Nov. Jama Open Network. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7643031/>

³ [Firearms Annual Report, PA State Police](#). 2020.

requests and expects permits to continue to rise.⁴ Other areas are making it easier to apply for permits by implementing an [online application system](#).⁵

In creating a fictional problem that requiring concealed carry permits undermines Second Amendment rights, the proposed legislation will undermine public safety and make it harder for law enforcement to reduce crime. We urge you to vote no.

Finally, I encourage you to heed the warnings of Texas law enforcement. **Texas Municipal Police Association Executive Director Kevin Lawrence said this about his state's initiative to do away with firearm permitting: "we're concerned that this bill passing will make the jobs for our law enforcement officers more difficult and more dangerous. This bill is just bad public policy... when we need to be lessening the frequency in which we engage armed citizens, we're going to - in fact - do the exact opposite."**⁶

While voting against permitless carry is critical, we urge you to support a series of amendments that would enact evidence-based solutions to rising violence, including:

- A02966, A03000: Establishing a waiting period for firearm purchases, which reduce gun suicide a major source of deaths in rural counties throughout the Commonwealth;
- A0975: Creating Extreme Risk Protection Orders;
- A02979: Repeals section of SB565 that would allow open carry in Philadelphia without a license to carry, a requirement that has existed for nearly 50 years;
- A02999: Requiring safe storage to reduce unintentional deaths;
- A03009, 03010: Creates Community-Based Violence Intervention Program to fund violence reduction efforts through PCCD;

If you have any questions about this or other gun violence prevention policies, I can be reached at adam.garber@ceasefirepa.org or (267) 515-1220.

Sincerely,

Adam Garber
CeaseFire Pennsylvania Executive Director

⁴ [More Pennsylvanians across the region are carrying concealed firearms, officials say](#). Chambersburg Public Opinion, Feb 23, 2021.

⁵ [New online option for concealed carry gun permit available in Fayette County](#). Herald-Standard, May 18, 2021.

⁶ [Law enforcement leaders voice opposition to bills allowing unlicensed carry of handguns](#). CBS Austin, April 13, 2021