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Concealed Carry Reciprocity – Effects on Colorado

Wednesday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 38, a bill to mandate concealed carry reciprocity. The bill still needs approval by the U.S. Senate and to be signed by the president to become law. Although the effects on Colorado will be nowhere as great as in states with strong gun laws, here's how it would affect Colorado:

- **Permitless CCW** – There are 12 states, including the bordering states of Wyoming, Kansas, and Arizona, which require no permit whatsoever to carry concealed. No background check. No training. Under H.R. 38, residents of these states will be able to carry concealed handguns in Colorado. This will also create additional pressure to enact permitless CCW (concealed carry) here, a proposal that has been blocked ten times by the legislature. Tom Mauser, Colorado Ceasefire spokesperson, noted “those defeats were for good reason, as nearly 5000 individuals (since 2003) have failed background checks in Colorado and therefore were denied permits. With permitless CCW, they would be carrying.”
- **Least Common Denominator** – Not all states are as thorough in background checks as Colorado is. Take Florida for example, where a 2007 study found that over 1400 felons have been granted permits. Some states require no training. Colorado denies CCW permits to persons with serious juvenile offenses, a standard not followed in many other states.
- **Sheriff's Discretion** – Colorado allows sheriffs to deny permits to problematic persons without a criminal record, as long as they have documentable evidence. Eileen McCarron, president of Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action, said that “sheriffs have denied or revoked permits by discretion over 1000 times since the CCW law was enacted in 2003. With H.R. 38, denied persons could obtain a permit in one of the states that do not require residency.” Neighboring Utah is such a state. Colorado currently does not recognize permits for Colorado residents that are from another state. This would be overridden by the bill.
- **Law Enforcement Intimidation** – The job of law enforcement officers would be complicated by twelve permitless states and a myriad of permits from different states and counties. Despite the confusing state of affairs, the bill would allow persons improperly arrested or detained to sue the arresting officer and the political jurisdiction.
- **Age** – some states issue permits to those who are under 21. Colorado does not.
- **Public Schools** – H.R. 38 would allow all with CCW permits or residents of permitless states to carry their guns into K-12 public schools. Colorado law, at least for now, would prohibit that, but it is unlikely that a person from out-of-state would know the Colorado prohibition.

Votes by Colorado's Representatives: AYE: Republicans Coffman, Lamborn and Tipton. NO: Republican Ken Buck and Democrats DeGette, Perlmutter and Polis. Buck cosponsored the original bill, but indicated he voted NO because of the amendment to fix the background check system.

Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been fighting for freedom from gun violence since 2000. Ceasefire initiated and was instrumental in the enactment of the 2013 Colorado firearms laws, which included universal background checks, a high capacity magazine ban, and domestic violence firearms relinquishment.

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