



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Colorado Senate – More Guns in More Places**

To a nation reeling in the wake of yet another mass murder – this time at a Florida high school, Colorado’s Senate responded with its affirmative vote to allow permitless concealed carry, which translates into more guns in more places. No need for background checks. No sheriff’s discretion. No training. No education on concealed carry limitations. Each resident gets to self-decide if they are eligible and then strap on their pistol.

Since 2003, nearly 5000 people in Colorado have been denied permits because they were prohibited possessors of firearms. Another 1100 have had their permits revoked. Under the permitless system of SB18-097, these individuals would likely feel completely comfortable carrying concealed, even though disallowed.

The 18-17 vote fell on party lines, with all (and only) Republicans supporting the measure. The measure now goes to the House of Representatives, where it is likely to fail.

Although this is the ninth year this proposal has been considered, a robust 45-minute debate preceded the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading vote. Senators Michael Merrifield and Rhonda Fields both noted that there is no desire for this legislation by the Colorado populace, with Merrifield noting that 88% of Coloradans are opposed.

Senator Jerry Sonnenberg, in speaking for the bill, indicated that our communities would be safer to have more people who understand and know how to use firearms carrying concealed. Merrifield countered by noting that is exactly why he opposes the bill, as it removes the requirements for training.

Bill sponsor Senator Tim Neville summarized that this bill has nothing to do with more guns. We strongly disagree. With no permit required, there would be far more people carrying hidden handguns, which translates to more guns in more places. Research shows a strong correlation between higher levels of gun ownership and higher firearm homicide rates, and data demonstrate that states with weak gun laws suffer higher rates of gun death. As Senator Lois Court stated “If more guns made us safer, we in the United States would be the safest in the world.” Unfortunately, the reverse is true, as our national firearms homicide rate is 25 times the combined rate of other advanced countries.

Senator Daniel Kagan summarized his opposition with a description of the bill as an “extremely reckless blanket permission” for carrying hidden weapons. We at Ceasefire concur with Senator Kagan and urge the House of Representatives to see to this bill’s demise. Ceasefire’s Eileen McCarron stated “There are many things Colorado’s legislature could do now to address gun violence but putting more guns on our streets is not one of them.”

*Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been working 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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