



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 25, 2017

National Concealed-carry Reciprocity Gains Momentum and Opposition

When House member Richard Hudson (R-N.C.) introduced his “Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017” on the first day of the 115th Congress, he said “it will provide law-abiding citizens the right to conceal carry and travel freely between states without worrying about conflicting state codes or onerous civil suits.”

He added, “As a member of President-elect Donald Trump’s Second Amendment Coalition, I look forward to working with my colleagues and the administration to get this legislation across the finish line.”



His efforts appear to be bearing fruit. As of this writing, [188 members of the House](#) have already co-sponsored his bill. And last week the Texas House and the Alabama Senate passed permitless carry — also known as constitutional carry — measures that would eliminate the requirement to obtain a permit in order to carry lawfully in those states.

Chris Cox, the head of the National Rifle Association’s Institute for Legislative Action (NRAILA), summed up the case for national reciprocity while simultaneously chiding those pushing back against it: “[Those opposed in the media] don’t report that honest, well-meaning people — nurses, stay-at-home moms, veterans, even a disaster relief worker — have been charged with felonies for simply having a lawfully-owned firearm. Each was legally licensed to carry a firearm in their own state, but [was] arrested and charged as criminals when safely carrying it through another, less-free state.”

Pushback against the reciprocity legislation is gaining momentum, especially in those states with highly restrictive firearms-ownership laws. Last month, New York City’s police commissioner, James O’Neill, joined with Manhattan’s district attorney, Cyrus Vance, Jr., in an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, claiming that such a law “would be a dangerous and unwarranted interference with state and city laws [which would undermine] public safety in some of America’s most celebrated neighborhoods and tourist attractions.” The two pictured tourists from concealed carry states riding subways, scaring the natives and resulting in “shootouts in Times Square”: “We don’t want subways packed with pistols or shootouts in Times Square. We don’t want our highly-effective gun laws superseded, overturned or otherwise interfered with. We will fight any federal action that lets visitors bring guns to our streets.”

Using such hyperbole as part of an argument merely reveals the weakness of that argument. For instance, nearby Vermont (which has enjoyed constitutional carry from its beginning and where an estimated 70 to 75 percent of adults own guns) has a violent crime rate of less than a third that of New York State. Just how would Vermonters visiting the Big Apple cause an increase in violent crime? The two worthies didn’t say.

Vance didn’t stop with the editorial in the *Journal*. On April 4, he [issued a press release](#) to oppose Representative Hudson’s concealed-carry reciprocity act. Enlisting the support of other like-minded



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officials, Vance wrote, “Concealed carry reciprocity is an attack on local law enforcement, and an attack on local laws. The same laws that apply to rural areas should not apply to urban areas with millions of people and thousands of police.... We will fight the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act in the halls of Congress, and if necessary we will fight it in the courts.”

Joining Vance was Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark: “This proposed bill would open the floodgates of people packing firearms on City streets, exponentially increasing risks to the public, as well as to the brave men and women of the New York Police Department and other law enforcement agencies.”

Queens DA Richard Brown added, “The enactment of the [CCRA] has the strong potential of undoing the City’s downward trend in crime by allowing individuals with weapon permits from states with lax gun laws to carry a concealed weapon on our streets, putting both our police and our citizens at risk. We must do all within our power to see that this does not come to pass.”

Nassau County DA Madeline Singas topped the histrionics with this: “Proposed concealed carry reciprocity legislation will invite the mentally ill, suspected terrorists, and others who can carry a concealed weapon in states with weak gun laws to bring a hidden gun into New York Schools, churches, or bars and cause bloodshed in our communities.”

A better objection to Hudson’s CCRA is a constitutional one, [as we have explained](#): “In a single stroke, then, Hudson’s bill, if passed into law, would abrogate and obliterate state laws — laws that each of the states have passed on their own, exercising their sovereign right to do so — making the federal government the final arbiter of who is allowed to carry where, state laws to the contrary notwithstanding.”

The need for Hudson’s bill is actually diminishing over time as the individual states, on their own, are working out the details of reciprocity between them. More than 30 states already allow those with concealed-carry permits from other states to visit and travel through them without violating the law.

The legislative process, as provided for in the Constitution, is likely to curb current enthusiasm over the CCRA. The bill presently languishes in committee, waiting for Trump’s “100 Days” agenda to play out. It must then pass the committee and move to the floor for a vote. If passed by the House, it must go to the Senate for its imprimatur, where the Republican margin is far smaller. By then it is hoped that cooler heads will have considered the constitutional ramifications of the bill and it is put aside, leaving the matter in states’ hands where it properly belongs.

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