



## Victories in Gun Wars Mount in Mississippi, Iowa, Florida

On Friday Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant [signed into law](#) the Church Protection Act, which, effective that day, allows church authorities to develop security programs that permit those carrying concealed to protect those churches, granting those individuals the same protections offered under the state's "Castle Doctrine" laws.

It expands the state's permitless carry law to include belt and shoulder holsters in addition to the already allowed carry (without a license) in purses, handbags, satchels, briefcases, or other fully enclosed cases.



Finally, the new law prohibits state or local law-enforcement officials from enforcing federal gun control laws that were not approved by Congress that conflict with the federal or Mississippi's constitutions.

Mississippi is the ninth state to recognize the right of a citizen to carry concealed without government permission. Only two states — Georgia and North Dakota — ban all guns from places of worship, while eight states prohibit those with concealed carry permits from carrying into places of worship. Every other state leaves the matter up to the churches individually.

Larry Dean, pastor of the Bridgetown Baptist Church in Nesbit, Mississippi, favors the new law, telling *The Daily Beast*, "The reality is that we're a soft target. Anyone can carry a weapon at any time and do whatever evil they are going to do. Having a gun is one way to stop or restrain them."

Not everyone was in favor of the new law, however. Larry Decker, executive director of the Secular Coalition for America, called it "the worst bill in America," adding that it puts "soldiers of God above the law, allowing them to act as judge, jury and executioner.... This legislation emboldens extremists by creating a legal means for radical preachers to enlist their congregants into "God's army."

The Church Protection Act in Mississippi follows a victory for gun rights advocates in Iowa, where just two weeks earlier it became the 42nd state to legalize silencers, or suppressors. That bill easily passed Iowa's legislative bodies and was signed into law on April 1. Civilians in the Hawkeye State are now free to own and use suppressors on their firearms without having to get permission or to register them with authorities or pay a fee for the privilege.

The Iowa bill took three years of hard work by the National Rifle Association (NRA), the Iowa Firearms Coalition, and the American Suppressor Association to persuade legislators to pass it. Said Joshua Waldron, the CEO of SilencerCo:

SilencerCo has been a strong supporter of the American Suppressor Association since its inception. We're proud of the hard work they have put behind [the bill], along with the help of the NRA and the Iowa Firearms Coalition.

Because of the determination and educational push by these groups, Iowans can now enjoy the



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same rights as are held by law-abiding citizens in 41 other states.

The Iowa victory follows pro-gun victories in Florida in January. In the Sunshine State one new law exempts a “recreational discharge” if “under the circumstances, the discharge does not pose a reasonably foreseeable risk to life, safety, or property,” while another stops prosecutors from putting people in jail for 10 years if they show a gun to scare off an attacker or 20 years for firing a warning shot.

While the above list is far from inclusive (thanks to the broad movement in nearly every state to reassert infringed gun rights), there remains much work to be done for those favoring such reassertions. For instance, Iowa’s American Suppressor Association has instituted its “No State Left Behind” movement to remove suppressor restrictions on those states that still have them, such as California, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York. Already Congressman Matt Salmon (R-Ariz.) has introduced his Hearing Protection Act to remove suppressors from the list of weapons regulated under the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA).

As victories continue to mount, pro-gun advocates are pressing their advantage on many fronts.

*A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at [badelmann@thenewamerican.com](mailto:badelmann@thenewamerican.com).*



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