

Shooters Committee on Political Education

Position Paper



A 3287 Englebright

S 1795 Espallat

Prohibits the possession of a loaded firearm at certain public events

PURPOSE

The stated objective of this legislation is to protect citizens participating in public meetings and provide a “safe atmosphere” for the democratic process.

POSITION

We oppose this proposal as being both unnecessary and overreaching. Encompassing virtually all publically accessible property in the state, this legislation would render any otherwise lawful possession of a firearm a felony if a government owns it or a political figure is standing on it.

There is no evidence that possession of firearms by licensed individuals poses a threat to public safety.

Absent any evidence of a threat from this source, there does not appear to be any real need for this legislation. It appears to be a reaction to the tragic event in Tucson in 2011. The only people legally possessing firearms are licensed owners and law enforcement personnel. Neither group poses a threat to public safety. Individuals who do pose a threat to public safety are not likely to be deterred by this or any other legislation.

This legislation is way too far-reaching.

The coverage of the proposed prohibition can be construed to include any gathering, regardless of location, at which political issues are discussed and an elected official or candidate happens to be present, even as a spectator. With political activities taking place in a wide variety of public venues, the prohibitions provided for in this legislation could prevent an individual from stopping at a supermarket or visiting the mall, or becoming a potential felon if he or she does.

The total exclusion of possession in “a government building” is overly broad.

The term “government building,” if taken literally, would include parking garages and public rest rooms. It would also presumably apply to facilities at public shooting ranges. This type of all-encompassing prohibition is uncalled for. Any government body can, as the owner or lessee, regulate the use of its facilities as it sees fit, including restricting the possession of firearms. We believe that existing authority gives each body the ability to manage its business as it sees fit.

This legislation needlessly prohibits possession by off-duty law enforcement personnel.

This legislation reflects the first attempt at disarming off-duty law enforcement personnel. We do not believe that this is advisable, as it constitutes an unnecessary interference with the ability of law enforcement agencies to manage and regulate their sworn personnel.