

Shooters Committee on Political Education

Position Paper



A 5479 Englebright

Same as S 1034 Serrano

Prohibits the possession of concealed firearms in national parks and national wildlife refuge systems.

PURPOSE

The proposed bill would prohibit the carrying or possession of concealed firearms in any federal, state, or municipal park, campground, or other recreational area. The possession of all rifles, shotguns, and handguns is currently prohibited in state parks and canals.¹ The sponsors contend that the possession of licensed concealed weapons somehow “represents an unnecessary threat, whether intentional or unintentional, to the health and safety of the citizens...”

POSITION

This proposal should not be enacted. In fact, this bill is pointed in the wrong direction. The licensing law should apply in parks in the same manner as any other public space. New York State law should be changed to make it consistent with federal law and permit the possession of licensed, concealed firearms within state parks and recreational facilities.

There is no evidence that licensed concealed firearms pose any risk to the public.

On the contrary, jurisdictions with the provision for concealed carry tend to enjoy lower rates of violent crime. Many parks encompass large areas and are thinly policed. It is not unreasonable for individuals to want to enjoy the same level of security they enjoy in their homes.

The possession of licensed concealed weapons in public parks is common in many states.

Effective in February 2010, individuals who are licensed to carry concealed handguns under state law may exercise that right in National Parks located in that state. In addition, 31 states permit licensed concealed carry in their state parks.

There are inadequate provisions for individuals living, working, or traveling within parks.

The proposed bill provides for possession in a residence located within a park but does not provide for transporting a firearm to or from the residence. No provision is made for individuals who transit parkland on public roads nor are there any provisions for individuals who are employed at businesses in private facilities located within the parks.

The prohibition could be applied to public shooting ranges.

The inclusion in the proposed ban of “other publicly dedicated recreation area” could be construed to include publicly owned shooting ranges, either indoor or outdoor, no matter where they are located. This is clearly much too broad a definition.

¹ 9 NYCRR 375.1(p) and 21 NYCRR 150.9