



WILLIAM M. HEIM
CHIEF OF POLICE

CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA

READING POLICE DEPARTMENT
815 WASHINGTON STREET
READING, PA 19601-3690
(610) 655-6241
(610) 655-6400 FAX

The House Judiciary Committee in Harrisburg is currently considering legislation to close a loophole in Pennsylvania law that governs the ability to carry a concealed firearm in this state: House Bill 2536, sponsored by Rep. Bryan Lentz. Pennsylvania has reciprocity agreement with other states to honor each others concealed carry permits. However, some states are not as thorough as Pennsylvania in granting these permits, and it is possible to be rejected for a permit to carry a firearm in our state but be granted one in another state. This allows persons to possess a concealed firearm in Pennsylvania even though they are ineligible to have a Pennsylvania permit. This is an issue that our state legislators must rectify up front before a citizen or police officer becomes a victim of a criminal or disreputable person who uses a concealed firearm against them.

My fellow police chiefs and police commissioners from around this state and the sheriffs and troopers who partner with us on many initiatives are of one mind on House Bill 2536. Already the word is out that to get around Pennsylvania regulations on carrying a concealed firearm a person only needs to go to another state with a reciprocity agreement, such a Florida, and secure their permit from that state's licensing agent. In the case of Florida, it is the Florida Department of Agriculture.

The Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Gun Violence Policy Group, with numerous police chiefs from all parts of Pennsylvania, has expressed their support in a letter to the state legislature. I am the group's chairman. I think the great number of police chiefs who have committed to this cause sends a strong signal that this legislation is highly recommended by Pennsylvania's law enforcement leadership. In my 33 year career, I have not seen such a unified message from my fellow police chiefs and sheriffs.

This bill seeks only two things.

1. Any PA resident that has been denied a conceal carry permit or who has had one revoked in Pennsylvania CANNOT acquire an out-of-state permit and be allowed to carry a concealed firearm in Pennsylvania.
2. Any PA resident who would be ineligible to receive a concealed carry permit in Pennsylvania CANNOT acquire an out-of-state permit and be allowed to carry a concealed firearm in Pennsylvania.

This is a clear and straightforward issue that should not be clouded or lessened by negotiation or compromise. We should not allow Pennsylvania law to be circumvented by weaker regulations that exist in other states.

Sincerely,

William M. Heim
Chief of Police





PENNSYLVANIA LAW ENFORCEMENT GUN VIOLENCE POLICY GROUP

June 29, 2010

Hon. Thomas R. Caltagirone
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
106 Irvis Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2127

Hon. Ron Marsico
Minority Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
218 Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2105

*CC: Representative Bryan Lentz, Sponsor HB 2536
All members of the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee*

Dear Chairman Caltagirone and Minority Chairman Marsico,

We are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 2536, legislation proposed to close a loophole in Pennsylvania law undermining the authority of Pennsylvania law enforcement to grant or deny concealed carry permits to Pennsylvania residents.

Pennsylvania law specifies that applications for a permit to carry a concealed handgun must be reviewed by the sheriff of the county where the applicant resides – or the chief of police if the applicant lives in a city of the first class. Police then conduct an investigation on the applicant – including criminal record, prison history, mental history, juvenile record, and his or her character and reputation.

Following the investigation, Pennsylvania law enforcement has the responsibility to grant or deny a permit to carry a concealed firearm based on the evaluation of the risk posed by that individual to the community.

Unfortunately, for those Pennsylvania residents who are deemed ineligible for a permit – or who fear they would be rejected if they applied – a loophole has been exposed in the law which allows them to obtain a permit by exploiting the reciprocity agreement Pennsylvania shares with other states, such as Florida, Utah, and New Hampshire, circumventing Pennsylvania law enforcement entirely.

This is a serious problem. In Pennsylvania, local law enforcement is assigned the authority to evaluate applications and to determine whether or not to issue a permit. Local police utilize lawful guidelines and are able to consider broader community concerns by investigating the reputation and character of an applicant – elements that a foreign permitting body cannot account for.

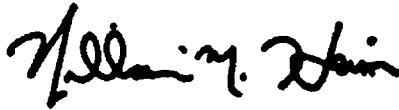
Already, there are numerous instances of suspects, including some with prior arrests for drug offenses, assault, domestic abuse, and even homicide – who would not have been granted a permit under Pennsylvania law – apprehended while carrying a concealed firearm and a license to carry from Florida, Utah, or New Hampshire. In some cases the suspect had already been denied a permit by Pennsylvania authorities. In others, they simply circumvented the Pennsylvania process, which might have exposed issues in their background they preferred to keep hidden from Pennsylvania law enforcement.

House Bill 2536 will close that loophole by confirming the authority of Pennsylvania law enforcement as the definitive permitting body for Pennsylvania residents. To be clear, we have no objections to visiting Floridians carrying a Florida permit in Pennsylvania, as per our reciprocity agreement with that state. Likewise, we appreciate the ability of Pennsylvanians to carry in Florida, and other states with which we share reciprocity. However, *we firmly believe that within Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania residents should be subject to Pennsylvania law.*

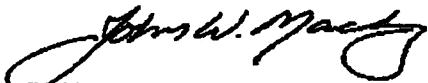
As Police Chiefs representing every corner of the Commonwealth we respectfully urge members of the House Judiciary Committee - and the entire State Legislature to pass House Bill 2536 to insure the safety of our communities and to avoid unintended danger that may arise from this loophole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



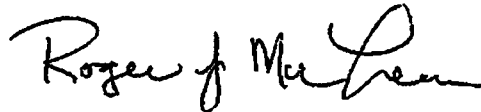
WILLIAM HEIM
Chief of Police, City of Reading
Chairman, Gun Violence Policy Group



JOHN W. MACKEY
Chief of Police, Bethel Park Borough
Chairman, Western PA Chiefs of Police Association



CHARLES RAMSEY
Police Commissioner, City of Philadelphia



ROGER MACLEAN
Chief of Police, City of Allentown



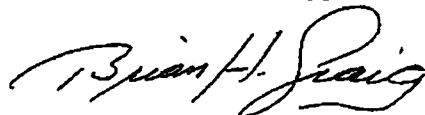
DAVID ELLIOTT
Chief of Police, City of Scranton



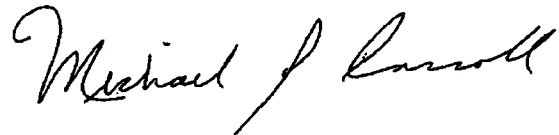
WESLEY KAHLEY
Chief of Police, City of York



MICHAEL CHITWOOD
Police Superintendent, Upper Darby Township



BRIAN CRAIG
Chief of Police, Swarthmore Borough



MICHAEL CARROLL
Chief of Police, West Goshen Township
President, International Association of Chiefs of Police



T. ROBERT AMANN
Chief of Police, Northern Regional Police Department
President, Allegheny Chiefs of Police Association



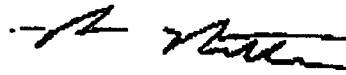
NATHAN HARPER
Chief of Police, City of Pittsburgh



STEVE FRANKLIN
Chief of Police, City of Erie



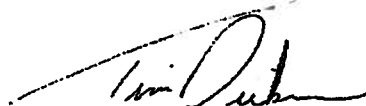
KEITH SADLER
Chief of Police, City of Lancaster



PIERRE RITTER
Chief of Police, City of Harrisburg



RUSSELL J. BONO
Chief of Police, Municipality of Norristown



P. TIMOTHY DICKINSON
Chief of Police, Towamencin Township

List of additional PA Police Chiefs actively supporting HB 2536 is attached.



Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Gun Violence Policy Group

This coalition of Police Chiefs, serving communities both large and small, has committed to pursuing and advocating for reforms to reduce gun violence in Pennsylvania, including House Bill 2536.

Statewide

Pennsylvania State Police: Frank E. Pawlowski, Commissioner

Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association: Carolyn B. Welsh, President (Chester County)

International Association of Chiefs of Police: Mike Carroll, President (West Goshen)

Central Pennsylvania

Bedford, Bedford, Jim Sigler, Chief

Berks, Bern Township, Douglas L. Knoblauch, Chief

Berks, City of Reading, William M. Heim, Chief

Berks, Western Berks Regional, Scott Wagner, Chief

Centre, State College Borough, Thomas King, Chief

Cumberland, North Middleton Township, Jeffery W. Rudolph, Chief

Cumberland, Upper Allen Township, James Adams, Chief

Cumberland/Franklin, Borough of Shippensburg, Fred A. Scott, Chief

Dauphin, City of Harrisburg, Pierre Ritter, Chief

Dauphin, Middletown Borough, R. R. Reismiller, Chief

Dauphin, PA Capitol Police, Richard S. Shaffer, Chief

Dauphin, Steelton Borough, Scott Spangler, Chief

Franklin, Chambersburg Borough, David J. Arnold, Chief

Indiana, Indiana Borough, William C. Sutton, Chief

Lancaster, East Earl Township, Kevin C. McCarthy, Chief

Lancaster, City of Lancaster, Keith Sadler, Chief

Lebanon, Annville Twp., Michael T. Burdge, Chief

Schuylkill, Coaldale, Timothy E. Delaney, Chief

York, City of York, Wesley Kahley, Chief

York, Southwestern Regional, Gregory M. Bean, Chief

York, Springettsbury Township, David C. Eshbach, Chief

Lehigh Valley

Lehigh, City of Allentown, Roger J. MacLean, Chief

Lehigh, City of Bethlehem, Randall P. Miller, Commissioner

Lehigh, City of Easton, Lawrence Palmer, Chief

Lehigh, Whitehall Township, Theodore D. Kohuth, Chief

Northampton, Bethlehem Township, Daniel G. Pancoast, Chief

Northampton, Colonial Regional, Roy D. Seiple, Chief

Northampton, Lower Saucon Township, Guy Lesser, Chief

Northampton, Palmer Township, Bruce W. Fretz, Chief

Northeast Pennsylvania

Carbon, Summit Hill, Fittos Joseph, Chief

Columbia, Hemlock Township, Michael D. VanDine, Chief

Columbia, Locust Township, Jeffery R. Sutton, Chief

Columbia, South Centre Township, Bill Richendrfer, Chief

Columbia, Bloomsburg, Leo V. Sokoloski, Chief

Lackawanna, City of Scranton, David R. Elliot, Chief

Lackawanna, South Abington Township, Robert A. Gerrity, Chief

Luzerne, City of Hazleton, Robert Ferdinand, Chief
Luzerne, Hanover Township, Albert L. Walker, Chief
Luzerne, Kingston Borough, Keith P. Keiper, Chief
Luzerne, Kingston Township, James J. Balavage, Chief
Luzerne, Laflin Borough, Michael Flanagan, Chief
Luzerne, Swoyersville, Thomas L. Dimaria, Chief
Montour, Mahoning Township, David Shope, Chief
Wayne, Honesdale Borough, Mark A. Flynn, Chief

Western Pennsylvania

Allegheny, Bethel Park Borough, John W. Mackey, Chief
Allegheny, City of Clairton, Robert Hoffman, Chief
Allegheny, City of Pittsburgh, Nathan E. Harper, Chief
Allegheny, Elizabeth Township, Robert McNeilly, Chief
Allegheny, Fox Chapel, David M. Laux, Chief
Allegheny, Municipality of Mt. Lebanon, Coleman McDonough, Chief
Allegheny, Northern Regional, T. Robert Amann, Chief
Butler, Butler Township, Gary D. Garman, Chief
Erie, City of Corry, Fred E. Corbett, Chief
Erie, City of Erie, Steve Franklin, Chief
Lawrence, New Castle, Thomas Sansone, Chief
Mercer, Thiel College Police, Donald Aubrecht, Chief
Westmoreland, Allegheny Township, John A. Fontaine, Chief
Westmoreland, City of Jeannette, Jeffery C. Stahl, Chief

Southeast Pennsylvania

Bucks, Bristol Township, James P. McAndrew, Chief
Bucks, Chalfont Borough, Frank L. Campbell, Chief
Bucks, Doylestown Township, Stephen J. White, Chief
Bucks, Newtown Township, Henry Pasqualini, Chief
Bucks, Pennridge Regional, David A. Mettin, Chief
Bucks, Warminster Township, S. Michael Murphy, Chief
Chester, West Chester, Scott L. Bohn, Chief
Chester, West Goshen Township, Mike Carroll, Chief
Chester, West Whiteland Township, Ralph J. Burton, Chief
Chester, Westtown-East Goshen Regional, John M. Dumond, Chief
Delaware, Brookhaven, John M. Eller, Chief
Delaware, Chester Township, Kenneth J. Coalson, Captain
Delaware, Collingdale, Robert W. Adams, Chief
Delaware, Glenolden Borough, Michael Donohue, Chief
Delaware, Marple Township, Thomas J. Murray, Chief
Delaware, Parkside Borough, John M. Egan, Chief
Delaware, Sharon Hill Borough, Robert H. Tinsley, Chief
Delaware, Springfield Township, Joseph J. Daly, Chief
Delaware, Swarthmore Borough, Brian Craig, Chief
Delaware, Upper Darby Township, Michael J. Chitwood, Superintendent
Montgomery, Cheltenham Township, John J. Norris, Chief
Montgomery, Lower Pottsgrove Township, Michael Shade, Chief
Montgomery, Montgomery Township, Richard J. Brady, Chief
Montgomery, Norristown, Russell J. Bono, Chief
Montgomery, Pottstown, Mark D. Flanders, Chief
Montgomery, Towamencin Township, Paul T. Dickinson, Chief
Montgomery, West Norriton Township, Robert P. Adams, Chief
Montgomery, Whitemarsh Township, Eileen W. Behr, Chief
Philadelphia, City of Philadelphia, Charles Ramsey, Commissioner