



Shooter's Committee on Political Education, Genesee County Chapter Executive Committee Position Paper



Genesee County Unfairly Discriminates in Concealed-Carry Pistol Permit Policy

In the United States of America, forty states are 'right-to-carry' states; issuing pistol permits to citizens of legal age excluding criminals or the mentally deficient. Vermont and Alaska do not require a permit to carry a concealed handgun, while eight states including New York, have a discretionary-issue policy, restricting licenses to individuals who meet certain criteria. Illinois and Wisconsin do not issue pistol permits in any form¹.

In New York, the majority of counties surrounding Genesee (Niagara, Orleans, Monroe, and Wyoming), with the exception of Erie County and occasionally Livingston County, issue pistol permits for personal protection². Genesee County, however, is an exception; here the licensing officer issues permits that restrict firearm use to sporting activities such as hunting, target shooting, or collecting², unless the applicant can show proper justification, such as employment², or a predisposition to targeted criminal activity³.

Individuals who hold an unrestricted permit issued by another county are not restricted when visiting Genesee County, and retain their right to carry a concealed handgun². These persons enjoy a level of protection that is denied for typical Genesee County pistol permit holders. The result is a stratification of rights; rewarding one class of citizen, while unfairly discriminating against another, based on either a supposed predisposition to victim-hood, or solely on their county of issue. The current policy is essentially arbitrary⁴ and clearly violates the spirit of equal protection under the law.

SCOPE of Genesee County recognizes the outstanding performance of the city of Batavia Police Department, the Genesee County Sheriff's Office, the New York State Police, and all other agencies in crime prevention and law enforcement within our region. However, it must be recognized that these resources are limited, and no organization can provide simultaneous protection to all citizens in all areas within our county. Moreover, law enforcement is under no legal obligation to provide protection to any particular citizen^{5, 6, 7}.

Random crime does not target any particular individual, and as such, all residents of the county share an equal chance of being a victim of opportunistic criminals. Therefore, our citizens deserve the right to defend their self, their family, and their private property using the most efficient means available, a concealed handgun.

Concerns about increased violence among citizens due to concealed carry laws have been unwarranted. Indeed, contrary to conventional thought, crime rates actually decrease in counties when concealed right to carry laws are adopted. Using data from FBI uniform county level crime rates, a 2004 study by John R. Lott concluded that murder, rape, and robbery rates consistently declined in twenty three states that recently adopted right to carry laws (murder -9%, rape -11%, robbery -7%)⁸. Another study revealed that allowing citizens to carry concealed firearms deters violent crime with no increase in accidental deaths⁹. Finally, citizens who are granted conceal carry permits are so thoroughly vetted that they are five times less likely to commit a crime than the average non-permit holder¹⁰ and their rate of criminality is three-fold lower than that of law enforcement officers themselves¹¹.

The citizens of Genesee County respectfully request that the pistol permit application process be amended to recognize protection of life and property as proper cause to carry a registered concealed handgun within the county, and we further request that this policy be retroactively applied to current county pistol permit holders upon their appeal.

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