



December 8, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our strong opposition to the recent House passage of the *Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017* (H.R. 38), which would require any state to honor concealed carry firearm permits issued in another state to qualified individuals. We believe this legislation would undermine a state's ability to develop and implement its own concealed carry requirements within its own jurisdiction and could jeopardize the public's health at a time when it is essential that the United States adopt policies to curb unnecessary violence and injury resulting from firearms. ACP also firmly believes that lawmakers should exercise more due diligence in weighing the risks and benefits of passing concealed carry legislation, in that H.R. 38 has not been the subject of even one hearing since its introduction in January.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 152,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

For over 20 years, ACP has proposed and advocated for policies to reduce deaths and injuries related to firearms and other forms of violence. With 11,000 homicides and 21,000 suicides by firearms each year, it is clear that firearm violence is a serious public health issue.<sup>1</sup> As an organization representing physicians who have first-hand experience with the devastating impact on the health of their patients resulting from firearms-related injuries and deaths, we have a responsibility to be part of the solution in trying to mitigate firearms-related tragedies.

H.R. 38 would force every state to accept concealed carry weapons permits from other states, necessitating states with stronger requirements to allow individuals traveling to their jurisdiction to carry concealed firearms, even if they have not met that state's more stringent requirements. Concealed carry reciprocity would make it easier for individuals who would not meet the requirements in states with more restrictive concealed carry laws to carry hidden, loaded firearms in public and poses a threat to public health and safety. For example, 27 states and Washington, D.C. currently prohibit individuals convicted of misdemeanor violent crimes

from carrying concealed firearms in public. Reciprocity would allow these individuals to carry firearms across the country, even if they are prohibited from doing so in their own states. In addition, reciprocity would pre-empt stronger state laws requiring training in firearm safety as a condition of obtaining a permit, weaken background checks and endanger victims of domestic violence by pre-empting state laws that prohibit individuals who have had restraining orders or been charged with domestic violence from obtaining concealed weapon permits. A 2017 study by Stanford University researchers estimated that weak 'shall issue' permitting laws were associated with a 13-15 percent increase in violent crime rates after 10 years.<sup>ii</sup>

Deaths and injuries from firearms are not just a result of mass shootings, they are an everyday occurrence in our communities, homes, schools, and workplaces, costing more than 30,000 Americans their lives each year. In 2014, ACP conducted a comprehensive analysis of the evidence on firearms violence and its impact on health, and concluded that the United States must adopt a range of policies to help mitigate and decrease the threat of firearms-related violence, including: ending the prohibition on funding for CDC research on firearm violence, requiring criminal background checks for all firearm purchases (including firearms sold at gun shows), prohibiting persons "straw purchasers" to unlawfully purchase firearms for other persons who are in a prohibited category, and banning assault weapons and large capacity magazines<sup>iii</sup>. Although at the time there were limited data on the impact of concealed weapon laws on injuries and deaths from firearms, nonetheless, we urged lawmakers to carefully weigh the risks and benefits of concealed carry legislation before passing such laws. The *Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017* would instead represent an unsupportable headlong rush to require all states to recognize the concealed carry laws and permits of the states with the fewest requirements to obtain such permits, without Congress having the benefit of independent, evidence-based review of the potential impact of such a policy on deaths and injuries from firearms. (Lifting Congress' restrictions on firearm research by the CDC and other federal agencies would help fill the dearth of evidence on the impact of laws, including concealed carry, on firearms-related injuries and deaths).

In conclusion, we urge you and your colleagues to work together, in a bipartisan fashion, to develop solutions to help curb firearms-related violence and injury with the benefit of full committee hearings and input from relevant stakeholders. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our perspective on this important issue in the interest of the public's health and that of our patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Ende", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jack Ende, MD, MACP  
President

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<sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. FastStats. Assault and Injury and Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>ii</sup> John Donohue et al, Right-to-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Controls Analysis, NBER Working Paper No. 23510, June 2017, accessed at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23510>

<sup>iii</sup> Renee Butkus, Robert Doherty, Hilary Daniel, Reducing Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in the United States: Executive Summary of a Policy Position Paper From the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med.* 2014;160:858–860. doi: 10.7326/M14-0216