



PO. Box 29816
Lincoln NE, 68529
(402) 982-1572
lwnnebraska.org

January 24, 2023

Senator Justin Wayne, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB77 (Brewer) Provide for Carrying of Concealed Handgun Without Permit

OPPOSE

Dear Senator Wayne and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

LB77 would remove the requirement to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon. The League of Women Voters of Nebraska believes the proliferation of handguns and semiautomatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.

According to the Pew Research Center, citing data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "In 2020, the most recent year for which complete data is available, 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries in the U.S." The Pew report also noted that more than half of all suicides (54%) involved a firearm and, in 2020, mass shootings (with four or more victims) rose to 513 victims.¹ Obtaining permits is a reasonable system to ensure gun owners pass critical screening measures and have proper training in the use of firearms. Recent studies show that a majority of Americans – 79% -- of both political parties oppose carrying concealed weapons without a permit.²

Beyond simply possessing a firearm, carrying it in public requires an advanced level of responsibility to ensure the safety of the public. Currently, to obtain a permit, one must pass a criminal background check and vision screening, not be adjudged mentally ill or incompetent, and provide proof of training. This training covers ways to avoid and diffuse a violent confrontation; safe handling of a handgun and ammunition; proper storage, including means to prevent accidental injuries to children; safe shooting fundamentals; and legal knowledge pertaining to gun purchase, ownership, transportation, possession, self-defense, justifiable homicide and various degrees of assault. This is important training that would be lost if LB77 passes.

Finally, LB77 also restricts cities and towns from enacting ordinances that address the level of enforcement needed in their communities. Cities experience a far greater incidence of gun violence and ordinances related to gun violence. Permits can promote public safety and protect and aid law enforcement in performing their duties.

Making a mistake with a handgun or allowing an unsuitable person to carry a handgun in public can have profound consequences. While permits and local ordinances cannot prevent all gun violence, they are powerful and effective measures to improve public safety. Please do not advance LB 7 to General File.

Thank you for considering our position and for all you do for Nebraska.

Sincerely,
Jill McDermott, Social Policy Director, LWNNE
Carol Dennison, Social Policy Action Team, LWNNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWNNE

¹Gramlich, John. February 3, 2022. "What the data says about gun death in the U.S." *Pew Research Center*. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>

²Molla, Rani. June 1, 2022. "Polling is clear: Americans want gun control." *Vox*. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/23141651/gun-control-american-approval-polling>