



PO BOX 8453, COLUMBIA, SC, 29202, (803) 636-0431, WWW.LWVSC.ORG

TESTIMONY: H. 3094, GENERAL LAWS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

February 9, 2021

H.3094 would allow every concealed carry permit holder to openly display handguns on their person or in a vehicle. The League of Women Voters of South Carolina opposes this bill. The League supports violence prevention and the strong regulation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons.¹ We regard the open display of weapons in public locations as a risk factor for increased violence. Very often it is an intentional provocation, as we have recently seen in the case of armed extremists who have displayed firearms in an attempt to intimidate federal and state officials.

Many in law enforcement also oppose open carry. In Texas, 75% of police chiefs indicated that they oppose open carry.² Chief Mark Keel of South Carolina's State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) has expressed "great concerns" about the bill and its implications for officer safety. Richland County sheriff Leon Lott has said "You ask any cop, and they will tell you this is a bad idea." Sheriff Lott also observed that guns are not permitted in the State House. Legislators protect themselves from dangers that they are willing to inflict on others. These officials were joined by City of Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook in expressing concerns.³

We ask that you do not forward this bill with a favorable recommendation. It represents a danger, a completely unnecessary danger, to the safety of both the general public and law enforcement officers.

Contact: Lynn Shuler Teague, Vice President for Issues and Action, LWVSC
803 556-9802 TeagueLynn@gmail.com

¹ League of Women Voters of the United States. Gun Policy. Impact on Issues 2020-2022: A Guide to Public Policy Positions. P.144. <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>.

² Dallas Morning News, "75 percent of Texas Police Chiefs Responding to Survey Oppose Open Carry," Feb. 2015, available at: <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2015/02/13/survey-of-nearly-200-texas-police-chiefs-shows-that-nearly-75-percent-oppose-open-carry>.

³ Maayan Schechter and John Monk. "Open carry gun bill gets new momentum as Republicans take advantage of November wins." The State. February 5, 2021, updated February 6, 2021. <https://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article249002335.html>