



**STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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PREPARED TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL BRAD D. SCHIMEL

Testimony on Senate Bill 169
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Wednesday May 31, 2017

Dear Chairman Wanggaard and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this very important piece of legislation. I am a fierce protector of the Second Amendment. I have said it before and will say it again, there is nothing to fear from law abiding gun owners.

The Second Amendment as established in the Constitution is more than just words on paper. It reflects an unambiguous and fundamental right to self-protection from those who wish to do us harm. Moreover it is essential to a free society. It is the mechanism by which our other civil liberties are guaranteed.

Wisconsin has a rich tradition of firearms ownership whether for sport, hunting or personal protection. The Department of Justice has and will continue to be the agency responsible for furthering that tradition.

If Senate Bill 169 is passed, the Department would continue operating the current permitting process. It would further develop and implement the additional license tier. I ensure we will do so in a manner as we have previously; accurately, legally and without delay.

Since the enactment of the concealed carry law, the Department has issued 500,706 permits. In 2016 alone, under my leadership, the Department approved and issued 109,701 permits. While new applicants and renewals have been much higher than expected, my commitment to the Second Amendment necessitated automatized processes and additional work shifts to ensure Wisconsinites may exercise this right.

Beyond issuance of these licenses, the Department of Justice administers the Hand Gun Hotline. This ensures hundreds of thousands of citizens may promptly and legally purchase a firearm.

Senate Bill 169 represents a reasonable policy decision by the legislature and it is not inconsistent with case law which has strengthened this right. To be clear, under current law, an individual legally possessing a firearm may carry openly without a permit. This bill would allow the same person to carry concealed.

The Department will carry out its duty as directed by law. My commitment to the Second Amendment cannot be overstated.

Please contact Lane Ruhland at ruhlandle@doj.state.wi.us with any questions.