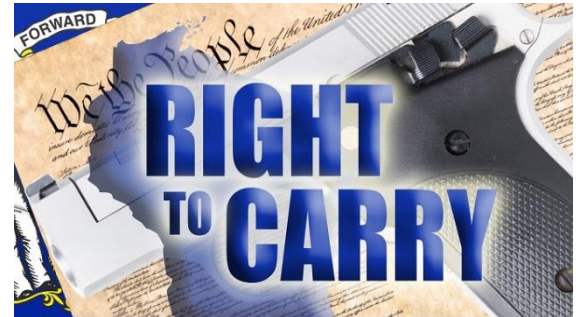




DAVID CRAIG

STATE SENATOR

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Public Hearing, May 31, 2017
Senate Bill 169
Senator David Craig, 28th Senate District



Chairman Wanggaard and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing testimony on Senate Bill 169 regarding the right to carry a firearm.

After 5 years and more than 300,000 concealed carry licenses issued, responsible and law-abiding gun owners have made the clear case to move Wisconsin forward and expand state law to reflect the constitutional **right to carry** a weapon in self-defense. This bill allows for the concealed carry of a firearm *without a license* anywhere in the state a person is legally allowed to carry a firearm and simplifies state law while reducing the cost to citizens who choose to protect themselves and their families.

The current license structure limits those who follow the law and presents administrative and cost barriers to self-protection. With this bill, we make carrying more affordable and provide greater freedom for those who obey the law while maintaining stiff penalties for criminals who commit crimes with firearms.

Under current law, the “open” or exposed carry of a firearm is legal without a concealed carry license. However, current law does not allow person to carry their defense firearm or non-lethal weapon in a purse or under a winter coat unless they get a concealed carry license. By removing the requirement for a concealed carry license, we align concealed and open carry laws and allow for a wide variety of carry options for those who wish to carry for self-defense. Law-abiding citizens will have the same right to carry discreetly that they currently have to carry openly.

Currently, 12 states have Constitutional Carry laws and an additional 20 states are considering the issue this legislative session. With this bill, Wisconsin will take the next step towards aligning our state law with our nation’s founding ideals.

The individual right to keep and bear arms is guaranteed in our nation’s constitution and is further enumerated in Wisconsin’s constitution to provide the “*right to keep and bear arms for security, defense, hunting, recreation or any other lawful purpose.*” It is with this constitutional provision in mind that we reaffirm the rights and liberties of law-abiding citizens to carry a concealed weapon without a license.

Thank you for holding a public hearing on this bill and for hearing our testimony.