

STOP OPEN CARRY 2021

POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

OVERVIEW

Open Carry refers to the public carry of openly visible handguns, which is currently illegal in South Carolina. Lawful concealed carry of handguns in public requires a permit, some training and a background check. If Open Carry passes, we'll see guns on hips:

- Standing in line at the ATM.
- In grocery stores and farmers markets with your kids.
- On the beach, walking down the sidewalk in urban areas, at public events (like Spoleto and Wine and Food Festival), at concerts. In businesses across the state.

To prohibit the carrying of a weapon upon any premises, 8x12" signage must be posted at each business entrance, and outdoor areas may require multiple 3x4-foot signs (prohibitive for many hospitality venues and events.)

POLICY STATEMENT

Open Carry represents a threat to both the public health and public safety of South Carolinians. Arm-in-Arm is opposed to the passage of any bill that would make Open Carry legal, with or without a permit or "training."

The existing concealed carry law already ensures that gun owners are able to exercise full 2nd Amendment Rights to own, and carry a handgun in public spaces and respect public safety concerns. SC doesn't need Open Carry, nor the enormous personal community risks associated with this dangerous policy.

Any Permitless Carry bill (termed "Constitutional Carry") would make lawful public open carry - no permit required, no fingerprint check, no training on weapon use or safety, and no education on state or federal firearm law. It would also drop the current requirement for a permit to carry concealed and allow non-residents to do the same. [H3096](#) and [H 3039](#) have both received subcommittee hearings with little notice to the public.

[H 3094](#) (Open Carry with Training Act), which already has a sufficient number of sponsors to pass over to the senate with a simple majority, is no better. As it stands, the permit process does not ensure safety, and Open Carry under any circumstances is dangerous.

Passage of an Open Carry bill will allow anyone to openly carry a revolver or semi-automatic handgun in any public establishment such as a grocery store, movie theater, or Walmart.

Spending legislative time and effort to pass any laws that would make legal the open carry of handguns (with or without a permit or “training”) makes South Carolina no safer at best, with significant negative effects on our communities. The policy will impact tourism, a \$23-billion industry. South Carolina is in desperate need of reform to improve public health and safety, not further erode it.

BILL STATUS + IMPLICATIONS

- BILL STATUS: Three Open Carry Senate bills ([S 32](#), [S 155](#), and [S 589](#)) and three House bills ([H 3039](#), [H 3096](#) and [H 3094](#)) have been filed.
- [H 3094](#) received a favorable report from the House Judiciary Committee, to be debated in the chamber.
- [H 3096](#) The SC Constitutional Carry Act 2021, **Permitless Carry**, has been scheduled for a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee this Tuesday, Mar. 15, with little more than 24 hours notice to the public. Link to the agenda [here](#) and to the live stream [here](#).
- Once this policy becomes law, there’s no going back, there’s no minimizing the impact. States have tried. In fact, some states that passed Permitted Open Carry have then **gone on** to do away with the permitting process entirely.
- Open Carry will impact various communities differently across South Carolina -- in rural areas, urban areas, **city** college campuses and especially where gun violence is almost a daily occurrence. Law enforcement officials say Open Carry is a flat-out dangerous policy.

OUR ASK

- We need to move now to effectively stop Open Carry. Ask lawmakers to STOP Open Carry from advancing. It’s dangerous and wrong for South Carolina. Find your state legislators [here](#).

QUESTIONS and CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Are you a gun owner? Are you aware/concerned about proposed Open Carry legislation?
- How do you see Open Carry impacting you/your family/your business/your community?
- Would you be uncomfortable if you saw a handgun on someone’s hip at a restaurant/sporting event/concert/park? Would this make your children/grandchildren uncomfortable?
- What message should we send to Columbia about Open Carry for SC? Why do you oppose this policy?
- Can we count on your voice to tell SC legislators to STOP Open Carry?

WHO IS ARM-IN-ARM

Arm-in-Arm is a non-partisan, SC-focused nonprofit working to reduce the public health crisis of gun violence by supporting relevant legislation and educating and inspiring communities across South Carolina to work toward practical solutions. arminarmsc.org