



Tennessee Sheriffs' Association, Inc.

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House Criminal Justice Subcommittee Members,

The intent of this letter is to communicate the position of your Sheriffs in Tennessee on HB786 and HB18 under criminal law, regarding handgun carry permits.

The Tennessee Sheriffs' Association (TSA) has been engaged with this bill beginning with last year's session. We have consulted with House Leadership and other state offices to relay our concerns. Our position is one based upon many hours of meetings amongst your Sheriffs, review and discussion of the language and intent, and the knowledge and experience of our law enforcement leaders.

While we support the enhanced penalties in the legislation of HB786, we strongly believe that completely eliminating the permit requirement will negatively impact the safety of Tennesseans and our law enforcement officers. We note that not all individuals are permitted to possess and carry handguns, as there are exclusions protecting each of us, our families, and neighbors. Individuals are excluded for criminal behavior, and mental disabilities to name two.

Since 1996, almost 25 years of successful implementation, the existing permit process has served our citizens well. The handgun carry permit process provides a method and procedure that allows confirmation and verification of lawful handgun carry. We support and take an oath to uphold the second amendment. We understand the value each of us have in bearing arms to protect oneself and the liberties of our republic.

Our request to maintain public safety and protection of law enforcement officers would require the following:

- ✓ Maintain a method with implied consent to verify that an individual is lawfully carrying a handgun.
- ✓ Retain training and certificate of basic handgun safety and proficiency
- ✓ Require concealed carry
- ✓ Agencies that provide training exempt from civil liability

We have no option but to oppose the bill as drafted. If the cost of obtaining a permit is viewed as a barrier, simply eliminate the permit fee. The safety of our officers and every Tennessean is the reason we go to work every day. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Respectfully,
Tennessee Sheriffs

Leadership in Law Enforcement

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