

GrassRoots GunRights

P.O. Box 2446 Lexington, SC 29071 <http://www.scfirearms.org>

February 20, 2007

The Honorable James H. Harrison
South Carolina House of Representatives
P.O. Box 11867
Columbia, SC 29211

Re: H. 3212 and H. 3310

Dear Rep. Harrison:

GrassRoots GunRights has an interest in two bills coming before the Judiciary Committee today - H. 3212 and H. 3310. GrassRoots urges you to pass both bills exactly as recommended by the General Laws subcommittee.

H. 3212 is a bill to amend the South Carolina concealed weapon permit (CWP) reciprocity law to help protect South Carolina CWP holders and their families when they travel in other states by allowing CWP holders from other states to carry in South Carolina. Once this bill is enacted into law, SC CWP holders will be able to carry in approximately 30+ other states. As of this morning, SLED's web site lists only nine (9) states with which SC currently has reciprocity, and www.packing.org lists another eleven (11) states that will honor a SC CWP regardless of whether SC honors their CWP.

The fear mongers and the anti gun forces oppose this bill by claiming all sorts of things that simply are not true. For example, at the General Laws subcommittee hearing last week, SLED tried to deceive the subcommittee with false claims that H. 3212 would allow 16 year old juveniles from New Hampshire to carry concealed handguns at Myrtle Beach. GrassRoots thoroughly discredited that ridiculous claim in a letter to the subcommittee citing federal law - 18 U.S.C. § 922(x)(2) - that specifically refutes such outlandish claims. Last year, Rep. Mike Pitts reported that SLED told legislators Florida issued CWPs to felons to carry guns even though SLED knows that federal law prohibits felons from possessing firearms and a state can not grant permission to do that which is prohibited by federal law. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep up with all of the outlandish claims being made to scare people. So, GrassRoots will stick to the facts.

The truth of the matter is that CWP holders have proven they are law abiding people no matter where they come from in these United States, and they are not a threat to public safety anywhere. There are good guys and there are bad guys, and the bad guys do not bother to get a CWP - they just carry guns without a permit. People do not change their character just because they cross a state line.

H. 3212 is a bill that recognizes good people remain good people even after crossing a state line, and H. 3212 will allow the good people of South Carolina to be able to protect their families when traveling out of state. GrassRoots urges you to pass H. 3212 without amendment exactly as recommended by the General Laws subcommittee.

H. 3310 is a bill to amend Section 16-23-20(9) to specifically allow CWP holders to carry while in their vehicles. This bill is not needed because existing law already allows CWP holders to carry while in their vehicles. But unfortunately, there are many reports of law enforcement officers not knowing the law and thereby harassing honest law abiding citizens for doing what the law allows. GrassRoots believes the proper solution is to educate law enforcement about the CWP law, not pass another law to say what the first law already says.

H. 3310 - as initially drafted - will cause harm primarily to our female CWP holders by making it a crime for them to carry in their purse when in a vehicle. This would force our female CWP holders who choose to carry in their purses to have to transfer the sidearm between their purse and the glove box or console every time they enter and leave a vehicle. This unnecessary and excessive handling of firearms is not in the best interests of public safety. Therefore, if this bill must get passed - and GrassRoots sees no need to do so, then please amend H. 331 as GrassRoots and Rep. Mike Pitts requested the General Laws subcommittee to do - and the General Laws subcommittee has already done - to protect our female CWP holders.

If GrassRoots leaders can be of any further assistance or answer any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Robert D. Butler at (803) 957-3959. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.D. Butler". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and a distinct "R".

Robert D. Butler, J.D.
Vice President
GrassRoots GunRights SC