

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Chairman, H.R. 822 will harm public safety. That's why law enforcement organizations such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Associations, and many other law enforcement organizations oppose this bill.

This bill would allow people to use their concealed weapons permit in any State in the Union without regard to the standards and requirements of those other States. This bill even allows people who are ineligible to get a concealed weapons permit in their home State to go out of State and get a permit and use that permit anywhere in the country except their home State.

Some States have minimum standards for those who may be eligible to carry a concealed weapon. For example, some States require firearms training and others deny permits to those who are under 21 or those with certain convictions for assaulting police officers, selling drugs to kids, sex offenses against children, or domestic violence. Standards such as these would be overridden by this bill because permits from States without these standards would have to be recognized.

Now, many States already recognize concealed weapons permits from other States. My home State of Virginia recognizes many States' concealed weapons permits, but it requires a 24-hour verification. And for this reason, many States do not enjoy reciprocity with Virginia because 24-hour verification is not available. In fact, one State, Colorado, doesn't even maintain a statewide database, so there can be no out-of-state verification. As has been indicated, a driver's license, any time of day, you can verify the validity of a driver's license. But the concealed weapons permit, many States do not have 24-hour verification.

In overriding the ability of States to control the carrying of concealed weapons by nonresidents, this bill would create a situation where the weakest State laws essentially become the national law. We would be creating a race to the bottom with our public safety laws.

Consideration of this legislation has been a challenge because apparently many people in this body believe that if more people carried guns, the crime rate would go down. Reliable studies, however, point out that the possession of a firearm is much more likely to result in the death of a family member or a neighbor than being used to thwart a crime.

This bill will undermine public safety. We should let the States decide whether or not or under what conditions to allow people who are in their State to carry concealed handguns. I urge my colleagues, therefore, to vote against this legislation.