

SB53

I am a physician from Grand Rapids. My wife and I are long time concealed pistol license holders. We will support legislation that would improve the existing CPL law for everyone, but this legislation seeks to carve out special privileges for a select group of people and for that reason, I am opposed to it.

There are groups of people that are already exempt from the "no gun zones", such as active and retired law enforcement officers, judges and even private investigators. They have proven that guns can safely be carried concealed in these zones. The mere presence of a gun does not precipitate violence.

For those of us that are not exempt from the "no gun zones", we see this restriction as a hindrance to our ability to potentially defend ourselves and our families in these areas. The very fact that retired federal law enforcement officers are now seeking this exemption further shows that these "no gun zones" should be abolished all together.

I would of course support a bill that would relax unnecessary restrictions for all CPL holders, but this bill does the opposite. By carving out exceptions for only a select group of people, it reinforces the idea that there are special classes of people that are afforded rights that aren't available to everyone. I reject the idea that some people are worthy of rights where others are not. I am offended by the implication that there is a group of people that are considered inherently more trustworthy than I am. This mindset is arrogant and those that feel this way should frankly be embarrassed.

If it is not a perceived superior moral character, then what else could make federal officers feel worthy of a special right? Some might argue that these federal employees face an elevated risk of attack due to their former career. This,,, is a false narrative. All kinds of people across this state have circumstances that put them at risk, but they are not given this exemption. As a physician for example, I could argue that I am at increased risk of retribution from a disgruntled patient. In Boston for example, on January 21 of this year, Stephen D. Pasceri entered Brigham and Women's Hospital where he proceeded to shoot and kill 44 year old Dr. Michael J. Davidson. The shooter was angry that his mother died under Dr. Davidson's care. My point is, you cannot know who is at high risk. It should be up to individuals to assess their own risk level, not up to the state to determine who is worthy of the right of self-defense and who is not.

Some may contend that additional training is the central issue for abolishing the "no gun zones" or at least creating an enhanced CPL status. If this is the case, then craft legislation that identifies additional training that all CPL holders could obtain, but don't create legislation that carves out a special class of people with unique rights that are out of reach for the rest of us.

IN CONCLUSION: If this Bill could be made to abolish "no gun zones" for all CPL holders, then I would fully support it. If on the other hand it only creates a special privilege for a select class of people then it should be soundly rejected. Thank you.