



March 4, 2014

Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

The Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners very strongly supports the elimination of county gun boards in Michigan and the passage of SB 789. This bill is our #1 priority for the 2013-2014 legislative session. It will establish consistency between Michigan counties in the concealed pistol licensing process, end long waits in some counties and eliminate much of the need for litigation against counties violating state firearms law.

County gun boards were started as part of the 1927 Michigan Firearms Act on behest of the Ku Klux Klan in order to prevent blacks from legally owning firearms. They're an outdated legacy of racism that have been eliminated in every state in the union -except Michigan. They're the main reason concealed pistol license fees are so high in Michigan. A concealed pistol license in Michigan costs \$105. In Ohio, it costs \$67. In Wisconsin, the fee is \$40. In Indiana, it's only \$30. SB 789 would help reduce these costs.

In other states, it takes an average of four weeks to obtain a concealed pistol license. Michigan law allows the county gun board to take up to 60 days. Because county officials successfully lobbied to make sure there was no penalty to them for violating that provision, a number of counties ignore the law. As examples, Kent County is taking 4-5 months, Macomb and Muskegon counties are taking 4 months. By eliminating county gun boards and retaining the point of application with county clerks and with background checks completed by the Michigan State Police, we believe the wait time can be reduced to two weeks or less in most counties.

Over the past 12 years of shall-issue concealed carry in Michigan, county gun boards have frequently violated the law in other ways as well. Many counties, such as Eaton County, force all applicants to appear before the board during regular workdays even if there is no reason to challenge someone's application. This clearly violates the principle of "shall-issue" and would be resolved in SB 789. Counties have imposed other illegal requirements on gun owners such as medical certifications that applicants are not mentally ill, arbitrary expiration dates on pistol safety training certificates and requiring instructors to register with the county. SB 789 would establish consistency across counties in the application and issuing process.

The Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners is the largest state-based firearms organization in Michigan representing over 20,000 gun owners. On their behalf, we ask for your support of SB 789.

Sincerely,

Brady Schickinger
Executive Director
MCRGO