

HOW FREE IS FLORIDA?

“Constitutional Carry” Gun Law Promotes Fear, Not Freedom

Updated September, 2023

The Second Amendment to the [Constitution of the United States](#), adopted in 1791 as part of the [Bill of Rights](#), provided to organize, arm, and discipline the federal [militia](#). It reads, “**A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.**”

In 1791 most households owned a firearm for hunting and defense in a time when grocery stores and civilian police protection largely did not exist. Following the Revolutionary War, “well-regulated militias” were a clear and present concern.

232 years later, the Second Amendment is cited as a right to self-defense. But if we’re so afraid of American society that we must arm ourselves at home, in public, in our places of worship and in our schools...that is not freedom. That is fear.

Some politicians parrot the line “Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.” So why give people easy access to guns? They claim “bans don’t work,” but their attempts to ban abortion, drag shows, LGBTQ+ Americans, accurate black history, and books show that is a blatant lie.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis quietly signed “**Constitutional Carry**” into law on April 3, 2023, just two days after the 128th mass shooting of 2023, at a Tennessee elementary school. (We’re up to 484 mass shootings this year as of 9/4/2023.) The unusually private signing ceremony was attended by gun rights advocates, including members of the National Rifle Association (NRA), but without notifying press except for FOX News.

Previously, Florida’s concealed weapons license required additional fees, mandatory background checks, and a firearms training course before you could legally carry hidden firearms on your person or in a vehicle. Now, *no* background check or training is required to carry a concealed weapon *almost* anywhere in FL - exceptions include the House and Senate chambers where the bill was passed, and any public event where DeSantis appears.

A poll by the University of North Florida’s Public Opinion Research Lab found **77% of Floridians, including 62% of Republicans, [do not support allowing unlicensed carry of weapons.](#)**

Of all the civilian guns in the world, 1/3 are in the hands of Americans, the only country on the planet where guns outnumber people.

In 2017, it was estimated that nearly 400 million guns were present in the U.S., including the military, police, and civilian owners. **Over 98% of the nation's guns were in civilian hands, equivalent to 120 firearms per 100 citizens.** In 2023, the number of firearms in America increased to around 466 million due to record breaking sales during the COVID-19 pandemic.

More Guns = More Gun Deaths

Multiple studies show that where people have easy access to firearms, gun-related deaths are more frequent. America has more deaths from gun violence than any other developed country per capita. Every country in the world has crime, anger, and those who suffer from mental illness, but our availability of guns means a much higher incidence of guns being used.

One in Five Americans has had a family member killed by gun violence. A [survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found that **54% of US adults** have either personally been affected or had a family member affected by gun violence.

U.S. Gun Violence Incidents in 2023 as of September 4, 2023:

- 29,303 people died of gun violence so far this year
- 484 mass shootings
- 1,214 children and teens (0-17 years old) have died, and 3,305 were injured

*Source: [GunViolenceArchive.org](#)

Gun violence is the #1 cause of child deaths in America.

The number of children and teens killed by gunfire in the United States increased 50% between 2019 and 2021, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of annual mortality statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Thousands of children have been killed and injured since January, but guns are highly encouraged in our schools - including in Florida's new Constitutional Carry law. In Florida, the right to bear arms is more precious than our children.

It is time to demand our more fundamental rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness cited in the Declaration of Independence. Our right to life supersedes the right to easy access to firearms everywhere we go. DeSantis and Florida's Republican legislature **de-regulated** access to guns, while citing the Second Amendment that specifies a "**well-regulated** militia."

It is time to hold accountable all politicians signing bills with the NRA at their side, while offering nothing but repeated “thoughts and prayers” to the millions of Americans mourning the senseless and preventable loss of loved ones. Your vote is your voice. Vote for freedom over fear in the 2024 elections.