

U.S. State of Texas Allows Open Carry of Guns



Dallas, January 4 (RHC)-- The practice of "open carry," where gun owners openly carry firearms while they go about their daily business, has seen an increase in the U.S. in recent years.

All licensed gun owners in the U.S. state of Texas can begin carrying their weapons in plain sight for the first time since 1871 under an "open carry" law passed in the Republican-dominated Texas Legislature.

Beginning New Year's Day, nearly one million people in Texas who have passed a required gun course and have a concealed handgun permit are being allowed to carry holstered handguns, according to the new law.

The law, however, bans the carrying of guns, either openly or concealed, in a wide variety of places including schools, sports arenas, bars and secure areas of airports. Although 45 other states in the U.S. have legalized carrying a weapon in public view, Texas will become the largest state in the nation to pass such a measure.

"Open carry" is strongly opposed by gun control groups such as the Brady Campaign and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. Opponents of the new law have said it could be frightening for the public to see armed people on city streets, and inside public buildings and designated stores.

Law enforcement officials have also expressed concern about how to deal with an unfolding crime scene where multiple people can be seen with weapons, which could cause deadly confusion.

Texas, known for its wild west and cowboy history, has some of the country's most relaxed gun laws and has about 914,000 concealed handgun license holders, a number that has increased sharply in recent years.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), firearms are the cause of death for more than 33,000 people in the United States every year, a number that includes accidental discharge, murder and suicides. In 2015, there was an average of roughly 36 gun fatalities and 73 gun injuries each day across the U.S., according to the Gun Violence Archive.

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