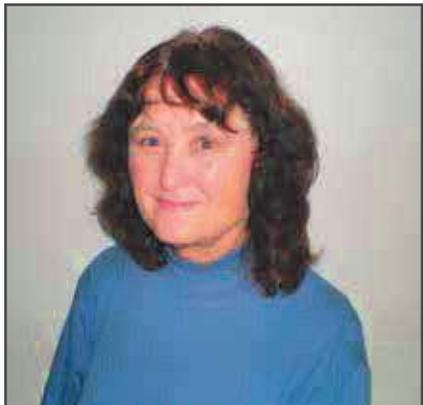


Making a Difference



*By Genie Jennings,
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On June 8 Maine became the seventh state to enact Constitutional Carry. In a quiet, moving ceremony Governor Paul LePage signed the bill into law. It will go into effect 90 days after the legislature adjourns. In mid-October "... a person who is not prohibited from possessing a firearm" will be authorized ... to carry a concealed handgun without a permit..." and also will be authorized "...to possess a loaded pistol or revolver while in a motor vehicle or a trailer or other vehicle being hauled by a motor vehicle."

Arguably, this legislation will have a greater impact on the freedom of movement and from fear for women than for men. Guns always are more beneficial for the weaker and more vulnerable be they women, children, the disabled, or the frail.

My sole reason for applying for a Concealed Carry permit several years ago, was to be able to carry a loaded gun in the front of my

CONSTITUTIONAL CARRY!

vehicle where it could be readily available should I feel threatened. I worked over two hours away from my home, often much longer during winter weather, necessitating commuting very early in the morning and late in the evening. It was dark, and lonely on the roads. Stopping at deserted, or nearly deserted, rest stops was very worrying. Having personal protection made my life much more stress-free.

Unfortunately, in many states CCW licenses are public information. Public information means anyone can access the names and addresses of people with these licenses. A woman living alone, especially a woman who has been the victim of domestic violence, is put at risk by this information. It is possible that she could be found by the perpetrator of that violence, should she be trying to hide. Knowing who has a concealed carry permit, and where she lives, also suggests that there will be guns present in the house, increasing the vulnerability to theft.

Following one of the notorious school shootings, maps were published in several states depicting the location of concealed carry license holders, some with only addresses, some including names. The fact that concealed carry had nothing to do with the carnage did not matter. Neither did the

facts that this killing spree occurred in a 'gun-free zone,' or that the killer had been suffering from mental illness, or that his mother, his first victim, had been trying desperately to have him institutionalized. Facts do not matter to the modern agenda-driven purveyors of information, who go by the name 'journalist' though they bear little or no resemblance to those who used to look for who, what, where, why, and how. These propagandists look only for happenings that can emotionalize the public and, thus, move toward the political ends they will use any means to procure.

We changed the access to concealed carry holder information in Maine only recently. Of course anyone who had such a license prior to the change has his information on myriad databases. Nothing ever disappears from the internet.

None of these things occur when a state offers Constitutional Carry. There are no records to peruse.

It took almost two decades to achieve this here. To understand the dynamics you need to know a little about the way Maine state government works. Both representatives and senators are elected every two years, and the legislature runs on a 2-year cycle. Elections are held in November, and the session begins with orientation and

election of the constitutional officers (Secretary of State, Treasurer, Attorney General) in early December. In early January, all bills must be submitted. We have well over a thousand bills each session. Only so-called 'emergency' bills may be introduced in the second year. Bills must move through their respective committees, be voted on by the entire Senate and House of Representatives, and have their costs included in the 2-year budget by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

ment. Governor LePage has been a proponent of Constitutional Carry, and has proudly displayed his CCW during discussions. His amendment would have secured the freedom to carry to more of the population, and his rationale was the obvious: we ask 18-year-olds to carry firearms to protect our country and our state. They should be able to carry them to protect themselves and those around them. The legislature agreed to extend the law to those between the ages of 18 and 21

Many of the arguments against Constitutional Carry concerned training. Obviously, training and practice are essential to any gun usage. Rational people will be sure that they get the training they need, and practice often. Rational people will absorb the gun safety rules, making them part of their practice and their lives. In a free society we must trust the judgment of people to do what is in their own best interests. We must trust people, despite the fact that we know some of them are not worthy of that trust.

Safely carrying a concealed gun is a daunting prospect. It is not something everyone would want to do. Happily, in Maine it is now something that every adult who has not been prohibited from gun ownership can do.

This law was a long time coming. Although all sponsors have been men, many women have co-sponsored and many others worked for passage of the various bills to allow concealed carry without a permit over all the years it has taken to achieve. Sen. Eric Brakey completed the task, but his way was paved by those who sponsored similar bills in the past: Rep. Adam Mack (1997-8); Rep. Dick Tracy (1999-2000); Sen. Paul Davis (2001-2002); Rep. Philip Cressey (2003-2004); Rep. Rich Cebra (2007-2008); Rep. Dale Crafts (2011-2012); and Rep. Aaron Libby (2013-2014). Governor Paul LePage signed Constitutional Carry into law.

Sirs, the freer and safer women of Maine salute you!

W&G



Maine Gov. Paul LePage signs “constitutional carry” into law (effective in October), on June 8 as Sen. Eric Brakey, the bill’s most recent sponsor, looks on.

2015 was a particularly contentious legislative cycle. Still, Eric Brakey, a freshman Senator, was able to shepherd the bill through committees and votes in both houses, dodging destructive amendments along the way. He managed to get a strong bill to the Governor’s desk, only to have it returned with an amend-

who are serving in the military.

The law does not extend gun ownership and transport to anyone who cannot legally have a gun. It is difficult to understand how opponents do not understand that criminals do not care whether they are carrying a gun legally when they go out to commit a crime.