



Gun Owners Of Maine, Inc.

Every citizen has a right to keep and bear arms
and this right shall never be questioned.



LD 1022: Interview With Rep. Peter Johnson

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[Rep. Peter Johnson](#) of Greenville is the sponsor of [LD 1022](#), "An Act To Improve Training Requirements for Obtaining a Concealed Handgun Permit". I asked Rep. Johnson if he'd talk with us about his bill, and he agreed. Here is the interview:

TT: You've introduced LD 1022, which would change the nature of the training required in order to obtain a Maine Concealed Handgun Permit. What was the impetus for this bill?

Rep. Johnson: The bill was requested by two certified NRA instructors. They told me that there were courses being offered that were not adequately preparing people to be proficient. They showed me advertisements that convinced me they were right.

TT: Is there a particular problem that this bill is meant to correct? How has the current training requirement, which has been in place for over 20 years, proved inadequate?

Rep. Johnson: Some courses have been offered that do not require students to fire a handgun. The people who requested that demonstrating proficiency by firing a minimum number of rounds would help alleviate the issue.

TT: The proposed training requirement is likely to be more time-consuming and expensive than the current safety training. Won't this discourage people from obtaining a CHP by creating a more substantial barrier to entry?

Rep. Johnson: It will insure they have a minimum level of training.

TT: Open carry of a firearm does not require any permit in Maine, and therefore no training is required. It is not clear why concealed carry should

require training, while open carry does not. How can that inconsistency be explained?

Rep. Johnson: I could only guess. That was not the problem I was presented with. I would guess that if someone has a weapon in the open people around them would have some knowledge of the existing situation.

TT: You've said this you introduced this bill at the behest of two firearms instructors. It's fair to say that if this bill becomes law, those instructors stand to profit quite well from the additional training requirements. Doesn't this bill have the effect of providing a government-mandated subsidy for firearms trainers?

Rep. Johnson: I don't think so. They already have all the business they can handle. I believe that their motivation was safety.

TT: Rather than requiring expensive training, why not amend the law to require issuing authorities to offer to "*evaluate an applicant's personal demonstration of such knowledge*", as the law currently permits, but does not require?

Rep. Johnson: That would be an option. Do you think a person can demonstrate proficiency without firing a handgun? [*I don't think I should have to – TT*]

TT: The bill, in its current form, does not appear to grandfather any current permit holders. Is it your intention to require current permit holders to obtain training which meets the proposed requirement in order to retain or renew their permits?

Rep. Johnson: No.

Todd Tolhurst is a licensed firearms dealer, NRA certified pistol instructor, and member of the Board of Directors of the Gun Owners of Maine, Inc.

