

House Bill 1588
Position: Support
Senate Judiciary Committee
March 31, 2025

Chairman Larson and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is **Michael Andersen**, I am the Owner of **Black Hat Handgun** based in Fargo. As a firearm instructor, one of my main areas of focus is conducting the classes and testing for the North Dakota Concealed Weapons License as prescribed by BCI.

First of all, I have to say that I support the removal of the restriction of the \$50 mandatory cap on the price of the class. This may have had good intentions in the beginning, but it should have been revisited years ago. I am one of the only ND CWL instructors left teaching in the Fargo area. Most have given up teaching because it is no longer financially feasible to do so. Costs have gone up in the past 25 years, yet the fees that we are allowed to charge have remained unchanged for those same 25 years. The market will determine what fees will be allowed, let the market make that determination in every part of the state.

Secondly, in the role of a CWL Instructor I have significant contact with citizens in Fargo and the surrounding areas and have many conversations regarding ND Century Code, particularly Section 62 on a weekly basis. There are several places within a class where there are questions about particular aspects of NDCC and how it applies to those who choose to own firearms.

I am writing today to you in regard to **HB 1588**, and my support of the bill, even with the issues that it has.

HB 1588 deals with one of the more discussed sections in my classes, Section 62.1-02-05. While I appreciate the clarity that many previous legislative sessions have brought to this section, I believe that there is too much left as incredibly vague and lends itself to interpretations may have never intended.

I wholeheartedly support the removal of the restriction on “A publicly owned and operated building”. While this may seem to be specific on the surface, it is unhelpful and unnecessarily vague for the average citizen who desires to follow the law when it comes to exercising their right to carry a concealed weapon in the State of ND.

The new proposed **SECTION 3** is the item I have difficulty with and would like addressed either now or in future legislation.

Possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon at a publicly owned or operated building.

A political subdivision may enact and enforce an ordinance prohibiting the possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon in public areas of a publicly owned or operated building.

First of all, a political subdivision may enact and enforce an ordinance... What does that even mean? What does “public areas of a publicly owned or operated building” even mean? Is there a limitation on the ordinance that can be written? Are there any definitions or guidance as to what the ordinance will or will not do? What is the intent?

Is this clear to the average citizen who is trying to understand their rights and responsibilities under the law? Fargo has a penchant for pushing the limits and bending the rules toward draconian restrictions if given the opportunity.

If you mean to say that citizens have the ability to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon in any publicly owned building (excluding schools of any defined manner) but if political subdivisions choose to restrict carrying in such a building, then the occupants/owners of that building would need to provide metal detectors and armed security in those places so that anyone entering can be assured of their safety being provided for since they are not able to provide it for themselves, then I would highly endorse this, but then this needs to be clarified. As it stands, it seems to be poorly written and is unnecessarily vague. The potential for political subdivisions to restrict in “public areas of public buildings” seems very open to interpretation.

I believe that the citizens of ND who make the decision to carry a concealed weapon have the right to have clearly written laws to follow, and laws that they can be expected to be consistently applied across the State. Simply stating that publicly owned or operated buildings have the ability to choose to restrict concealed weapons by providing metal detectors and armed security in those places would be of great assistance for compliance. This allows law abiding citizens the right to protect and defend themselves where such security and protection assurances are not provided.

I urge you to seriously amend this bill, but I can still recommend a **DO PASS** as it stands since it does provide a good place to continue clarifying our rights as responsible firearm-owning citizens.

For the sake of the citizens that you represent, please provide clarity and conciseness, not obfuscation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Andersen
Black Hat Handgun