



## *Lehigh Valley Project 9-12 Tea Party Group, Inc.*

### Open Carry of Long Guns in a Public Place

#### Introduction

The purpose for issuing a statement on any given topic is to make it clear to the public in general, where this committee stands on that issue, and to provide a unified voice when committee members speak on behalf of the committee.

#### Statement on The Open Carry of Long Guns in Public Places

While it is certainly lawful in PA for a non-prohibited person to carry a long gun in a public place, it is this committee's position that generally, doing so should be avoided.

In Pennsylvania, since the open carry of handguns is not prohibited, there seems to be no practical reason for the carry of a long gun in public. Typically, when we do see long guns carried openly, it is at a political rally or protest, and is normally intended to make a political statement.

Unfortunately, when the average reasonable person sees protesters with long guns, the entire group is then cast as extremists who should therefore be ignored. This of course defeats the purpose of the rally or protest, which is to call attention to a particular issue.

One might then also question the open carry of hand guns. After all, don't all guns cause fear in the hearts of some? Well, yes some people are fearful of guns, and some are simply opposed to the idea of carrying a gun in public at all. However, this committee is not concerned with the view of the 20% on the Left or the Right of the political scale. Our focus is on the 60% in the middle.

The average Pennsylvanian, the person in that middle 60% normally does not react to someone with a holstered sidearm. Instinctively, that person understands that the firearm is intended for defensive purposes. They seem to know that handguns are for personal protection against aggression. Further, they often see police with sidearms interacting with the public in a calm and relaxed manner. So, for the average person, the mind does not typically register an 'alarm' at the sight of a handgun.

Long guns however, normally elicit a reaction. The long gun, often used in SWAT Team entry or for long range shooting, is not typically used for personal civilian defense in a public setting. Instinctively the average person knows this. So, when they see a long gun, the alarm goes off. They perceive that the long gun is out of place here, and conclude "something is wrong with this picture".

When that happens, they are suddenly no longer interested in what we might have to say, as advocates. Instead, they will be inclined to disengage and to move away from the area. When that happens, we lose a potential advocate for our cause.

Therefore, this committee requests that in non-emergency situations, fellow 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment supporters refrain from the open carry of long guns in public settings.

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