

# HB 4003 – Remove Felony Penalty for Expired CPL

## Opposing Testimony

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am here to speak in opposition to HB 4003.

Mr./Madame Chair, owning a firearm is not a responsibility to take lightly. We want our state and its citizens to be safe, which is precisely why we issue concealed pistol licenses (CPLs) in the first place. We want to ensure that those who have a concealed firearm are trained in how to use it well and are responsible enough to take that charge seriously.

I recognize that there are concerns surrounding the severity of the punishment placed on those with expired licenses. But I would like to clarify a few of these concerns. The bill states that a person can be punished by up to \$2,500 or by up to 5 years in prison. I would like to note, Mr./Madam Chair, that the punishment is *up to* this level, meaning that it may not *exceed* that level of punishment. The likelihood that a judge would *administer* this severe of a sentence is very unlikely, and to the best of my knowledge there's no case where this sentence was given.

Mr./Madame Chair, one could argue that the potential for this severe punishment is too steep, however unlikely it may be. But, if even granting this argument to be valid, to say that an expired CPL is only punishable by a \$330 fine allows people to take this requirement far too lightly. The purpose of having a CPL is to certify that you are trained and authorized to conceal a loaded firearm for the purpose of self-defense using deadly force if necessary. To say that responsibility is only worth a few hundred dollars is negligent at best.

Mr./Madame Chair, I agree some changes must be made, but this is far too lenient of a position. I believe we can improve the requirements of this bill without compromising the weight of this responsibility. It could be amended to reduce maximum jail time, turning it into a misdemeanor instead of a felony or perhaps even providing stipulations that the Secretary of State give virtual notice as well to prevent CPL holders from being notified too late. There are many, many options that are far less lenient and negligent than this bill would offer.

Mr./Madame chair, I respect anyone who can responsibly own a CPL, and I think we can all agree that a concealed firearm in the possession of a responsible person is essential. So let us ensure that that responsibility is respected. I therefore strongly urge this committee to vote no on HB 4003 under its current form.

Thank you for your time and I will welcome any questions from this committee.