

HB 4003 – Remove Felony Penalty for Expired CPL

Supporting Testimony

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair, my name is _____ and I stand before you today in fervent support of HB 4003.

Ownership of a firearm is both a fundamental right and a great responsibility for all citizens to bear. I don't want us to take lightly the weight of owning and being trained in firearm use, just as I don't want us to take lightly the use and ownership of a car. For both cases, it is important that those who have a license to keep it up to date. However, to say that a person neglecting to renew their license is deserving of a felony charge is far too excessive. Under current Michigan law, if a person is late on renewing their CPL by even one day, the resulting punishment is paying up to \$2,500 or spending up to 5 years in prison. Also under Michigan law, that person will be barred from ever having a firearm again as felons in Michigan are not permitted to own firearms. All of this is because someone has neglected to renew his or her CPL. But the failure to renew may not even be the fault of the CPL holder.

A CPL must be renewed every five years, and notice of this is provided by the Secretary of State via mail. I would like to note that the address provided to the Secretary of State for the initial registration of a CPL will be five years old by the time the license needs to be renewed, and it is highly likely that the CPL holder has moved to a new address. Mr./Madam Chair, this could mean that a father or mother, who ordinarily is a law-abiding citizen and only wants to protect his/her family could fail to receive notice of the need to renew his/her CPL, and as a result could be arrested and sentenced up to five years of imprisonment. But that is just the beginning, because on the other side of this ordeal, this person has lost his/her job, wages, possibly their home, and the formative years for his/her children. In addition, the option to protect his/her family is now gone.

It is for these reasons that I urge this committee to vote yes on HB 4003. This bill would change the penalties of failing to renew a CPL from a felony to an infraction. This would mean that instead of facing years of jail time or \$2,500, this person would only have to pay \$330 fine so long as it only expired by 1 year or less and the person is eligible to acquire a CPL. By implementing this change, gunowners will still face consequences for their inaction while also easing the burden upon them. Under this bill, gunowners don't need to fear jail time or having their access to firearms infringed upon. Our law desperately needs to be amended for the purposes of fair treatment and adequate protection for our citizens.

I therefore humbly but fervently ask that you vote yes on HB 4003. I will gladly take any questions from you at this time.

Article

Brenden Bourdreau (April 29, 2019). Gunpowder Magazine, *Carrying with an Expired Permit in this State Could Make You a Felon*. Retrieved from <https://gunpowdermagazine.com/carrying-with-an-expired-permit-in-this-state-could-make-you-a-felon/>