



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF FLORIDA

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## **A SCARY THOUGHT FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

In a matter of weeks the Florida Legislature may make it legal for 1.45 million Floridians with concealed-weapons licenses to openly carry guns in places ranging from restaurants to shops, churches, tourist attractions and playgrounds.

Tallahassee, Fla. (December 11, 2015) - Experts warn that the open-carry gun proposal (SB 300/HB 163) will practically guarantee an increase in accidental shooting deaths and injuries.

"Common-sense tells you that just because a person has a license, they aren't necessarily careful and responsible all the time," said Pamela Goodman, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida.

The 2016 legislative session, which starts Jan. 12, also will consider allowing people with concealed-weapons licenses to carry guns on college and university campuses.

"The time for action is now, Goodman said. "Lawmakers must be made to realize the dangerous potential of a vote for open carry. They should work to make Floridians safer and let reason triumph over fear mongering.

The Florida Police Chiefs Association's board voted 15 to 7 Dec. 10 to back the proposal, as long as they could have changes made to protect law enforcement officers.

The Florida Sheriffs Association opposes the proposal.

State Rep. Dave Kerner, D-West Palm Beach, said openly carrying a firearm is a foreign concept to most Floridians, one that most people are passionately against.

"With the intervention of the Florida Chiefs of Police Association into the process, they are attempting to speak on behalf of a law enforcement community that is at odds with the overall policy," said Kerner, a former police officer.

"This bill is NOT about the Second Amendment," Kerner said. "Rather, it is a bill that would force thousands of firearms into the daily lives of 20 million Floridians, and even more visitors and tourists. The time to act is NOW. Several legislators have stepped up to the plate to try to defeat this bill, but the bill has moved swiftly. It is time for our community and electors to join me and the League of Women Voters in ensuring our elected lawmakers honor the oath we have taken; to vote the will of our constituents."

Gun owners make up some of those constituents. A new national Public Policy Polling study shows that 59 percent of gun owners think the National Rifle Association has stopped focusing on gun safety and is bowing to the lobbyists and special interests of gun manufacturers.

"We all know these are dangerous times but we must not use the ruthless, crazed actions of a few to provide an excuse to legally expose millions of people to guns," Goodman said. "Even the law enforcement community is divided."

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