



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

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Tampa Mayor, Police Chief, State Attorney, and League of Women Voters of Florida To Speak Out Against Open-Carry Gun Legislation

Tampa Mayor **Bob Buckhorn**, Police Chief **Eric Ward** and State Attorney **Mark Ober** will speak out against proposed legislation to allow the open carry of guns in Florida at a 3 p.m. news conference today, at Tampa Police Headquarters

The news conference is being hosted by the League of Women Voters of Florida, which also opposes the legislation that would allow people with gun permits to openly display firearms in public areas.

"This is not a Second Amendment issue," said **Patricia Brigham**, chair of the League's Gun Safety Committee. "This is a public safety issue."

She added that there has been no public outcry for open-carry laws or sufficient polling to capture public opinion. Instead, she said, it is being driven by gun lobbyists and their legislative surrogates.

Chief Ward stands with several other police chiefs, as well as the Florida Sheriff's Association, in opposing the open-carry legislation. "I support a citizens' right to bear arms, but it is my belief that this legislation will not make our communities safer," said Chief Ward. "It's better to leave the duties of law enforcement to those who have taken an oath to protect our community."

State Attorney Mark Ober agrees. "We need to use a common sense approach as

we o forward with this open carry issue and not be swayed to do something that could negatively impact public safety," said Ober.

In addition to fears about public safety, the League of Women Voters and others question the impact such a law would have on tourism -- a bread and butter industry for the state and the greater Tampa area. "Vacationers might think twice about bringing their children to a place where men and women are walking around with guns in plain view," Brigham said.

The House and Senate versions of the bill are currently being debated in the Judiciary committees.

The 3pm news conference will be held in the second-floor lobby of the Tampa Police Headquarters at 411 N. Franklin St.

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The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, please visit the League's website at: www.TheFloridaVoter.org.