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**Statement from Representative Theodore Deutch (FL-19)**  
**On DEUTCH\_035 amendment to H.R. 822**

Mr. Chairman.

My amendment would ensure that H.R. 822, the “National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act of 2011,” has additional protections in place for the general public. This amendment will limit the scope of H.R. 822 to permit individuals with a concealed weapon permit to cross state lines in those states with a well maintained and effective database that contains background information on individuals with concealed weapon permits. The amendment will make this database accessible to law enforcement officers which will give them the tools they need to verify that an individual from another state has a valid permit. This amendment is supported by Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

I strongly oppose H.R. 822, the “National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act,” which tramples on the laws of almost every state. Under this bill, states would be required to accept concealed weapon permits from every other state. Indeed, many states have adopted specific criteria that must be satisfied by an individual to be eligible to receive a concealed weapon permit. For example, my state of Florida has a right-to-carry law that requires a person to demonstrate “competency with a firearm;” that they do not have a felony conviction; that they do not have a record of drug or alcohol abuse; that they have not been committed to a mental institution or adjudged incompetent or mentally defective; and other criteria that must be

satisfied before a concealed weapon permit can be issued to an individual. Despite these strict requirements, Florida's right-to-carry law is fraught with serious problems.

Since 1987, the year that Florida adopted a right-to-carry law, the state has issued more than 2 million concealed weapon permits. While law abiding citizens have been successful in obtaining a concealed weapon permit, many criminals from other states that enforce stricter right-to-carry laws also have been successful in obtaining a concealed weapon permit in Florida. Even more concerning is that according to a 2007 investigation by the *Sun-Sentinel*, Florida provided concealed weapon permits to more than 1,400 people who pleaded guilty or no contest to felonies such as burglaries, sexual battery, and child molestations; 216 people with outstanding warrants; 128 people with active domestic violence injunctions; and 6 registered sex offenders.<sup>[1]</sup> Florida, however, is not alone in approving concealed weapon permits to people with criminal backgrounds. In fact, it was reported in a 2009 article in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* that one county in Tennessee issued concealed weapon permits to 70 residents with arrest histories, which included robbery, assault, and domestic violence.<sup>[2]</sup> Such serious lapses in states applying qualifying criteria to individuals seeking a concealed weapon, threaten the safety of our communities and our law enforcement officers. Under H.R. 822, law abiding individuals with concealed weapon permits and individuals with criminal backgrounds who have received a concealed weapon permit will be allowed to cross state lines with their weapon. It will be essential that law enforcement officers across our nation have access to personal and criminal

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<sup>[1]</sup> Megan O'Matz and John Maines, "Investigation reveals criminal pasts of those toting guns," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. January 28, 2007.

<sup>[2]</sup> Marc Perrusquia, "Armed and Dangerous: Dozens with violent histories received handgun carry permits," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, March 12, 2009: <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2009/mar/12/armed-and-dangerous-tennessee-gun-debate-prone/?print=1>

history background information on individuals who have received a concealed weapon permit from another state.

Accordingly, my amendment would only permit individuals to cross state lines with a concealed weapon if the state has authorized the creation of and effectively maintains an Nlets system, or the National Law Enforcement Teletype System. Under my amendment, this system would be accessible by law enforcement officers 24 hours per day, seven days per week in all states across the country. With this system in place, law enforcement officers would be able to access the name, address, date of birth, and most importantly any criminal history of each person in the United States who has been issued a permit to carry a concealed weapon. Requiring that a state has an adequately maintained and effective Nlets system in place will provide law enforcement officers with the essential background information they would need to protect our communities as individuals with concealed weapons cross state lines as permitted under the bill.

It is critical that we provide law enforcement officers with the tools they need to enforce concealed weapon permit laws and protect the public safety. Without an up-to-date and effective database system in place that is accessible to law enforcement officers 24 hours per day, seven days per week that permits officers to access the criminal background of an individual with a concealed weapon permit, law enforcement officers will be unable to adequately protect the public under this bill. My amendment, therefore, ensures that an effective database with background information on individuals with gun permits is in place and accessible to law enforcement officers. I urge its adoption.