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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE, OF TEXAS

RULES COMMITTEE TALKING POINTS

H.R.822,

**"THE NATIONAL RIGHT-TO-CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT
OF 2011"**

AMENDMENT # 1



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2011



I thank the Chairman for the opportunity to explain my amendment to H.R. 822, the “National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act of 2011.” My amendment # 1 ensures that a comprehensive database is implemented which provides a listing of individuals from each State, with permits and licenses to possess and carry concealed weapons, be available to law enforcement officers in all States 24-hours a day.

Without a national system to check who can legally carry a concealed gun, even routine situations like traffic stops could become life-threatening. If an officer discovered a gun, they would have to quickly and accurately determine whether the out-of-state permit was valid. This is a nearly an impossible task in the middle what could be a tense or dangerous moment.

Every sheriff and police officer in the country would have to honor concealed carry permits from all 50 states -- but first they'd need to be able to verify the validity of each state's different type of permit. Knowing local laws and recognizing when someone is breaking them already keeps our law enforcement busy. But this law wouldn't even give police a way to ensure out-of-state permits were valid or up to date.

Some state permits look as simple as a library card, and would be just as easy to forge. Reciprocity could also obstruct law enforcement efforts to stop illegal gun trafficking.

Simply having a concealed carry permit would enable a gun trafficker to bring cars or backpacks full of guns across state lines, and they could simply present their out-of-state carry permit if they got stopped. To make any arrests, police would actually have to observe a trafficker in the act of selling guns illegally.

States should have the right to know whether the individuals carrying concealed weapons have valid permits or licenses to carry or possess concealed weapons. This measure would require that one central database be created, which encompasses the information of each person from each state who has a current, valid permit or license to carry or possess a concealed handgun – and requires that this comprehensive database be accessible to law enforcement in any state 24 hours a day.

I believe that an amendment creating a comprehensive listing of licensed individuals from each State, in one main location that is accessible any time of day is a necessary tool that will protect the public and the safety of law enforcement officers.

Currently, there are approximately 20 states that have created state-wide databases that list individuals who are licensed to carry or possess concealed weapons in the state – and these databases are made accessible to the public. This amendment will

create a standard that is sure to provide law enforcement with the information it needs to determine whether the individuals suspected of found to carry a concealed weapon have valid authority to do so.

I urge the committee to support my amendment to H.R. 822. The bill before us today takes away a state's right to set their own criteria for determining who should be allowed to carry a fire arm within their borders.

A big concern is that lives of the general public along with the safety of law enforcement officials will be jeopardized, if law enforcement is not supplied with the necessary information regarding which individuals are authorized to carry a concealed weapon. We must be proactive in effectuating this amendment requiring the maintenance of a 24-hour a day, comprehensive database of permit and license carriers of concealed weapons.

This amendment is aimed at protecting the residence of each state and law enforcement officers who have to make rapid fire determinations on the legitimacy of individuals who are in possession of a fire arm.

In order to ensure that we act fervently to protect the lives of those who risk their lives for the general public on a daily basis. Again, this amendment will strengthen a State's ability to continue its efforts to protect the safety of its citizens and law enforcement officials.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.