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CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

May 3, 2017

New York Congressional delegation

Dear Congress Member:

As elected officials representing New Yorkers, we share the same goals – chief among them protecting the security of our residents and the vibrancy of the state’s economy. Any legislation that will clearly make New Yorkers less safe concerns me greatly. That’s why I strenuously urge you to oppose H.R. 38 and S. 446, the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 (“CCRA”), which would require each state to recognize the concealed carry permits of gun owners from all 49 other states. Worse yet, these bills would force each state to allow residents of the 12 states that do not require any concealed-carry permit to carry hidden, loaded guns within their borders. This legislation would effectively invalidate the strong, thoughtful, and comprehensive licensing rules that New York has relied upon to protect our constituents.

If the CCRA is enacted, violent criminal offenders will be able to carry concealed weapons in our state. Our streets could be flooded with guns from out-of-state residents, which will increase the chances of gunfire occurring in our densely crowded urban streets, and police officers will be put in greater danger. The cumulative effect this would have on public safety, the work of law enforcement, and on our business community is nearly unimaginable.

As you know, each state, including New York, has traditionally crafted its own firearms licensing laws to address its particular needs. Some states’ permitting procedures allow permits to be issued to felons, including rapists, burglars, armed robbers, and domestic violence offenders. New York requires, among other things, good cause for the issuance of a concealed-carry permit, and a background check that requires an applicant to be of good moral character, free of serious criminal convictions, and not subject to a protective court order.

The House version of the CCRA would allow an individual who is denied a concealed carry permit by New York State to obtain an out-of-state permit in a state that does not impose similar restrictions. Criminals would be able to carry a concealed weapon in New York, even though our state would have denied them such a permit. The distinctions among the states, and the careful decisions that each state’s legislature has made about firearm licensing, would be effectively erased.

Police chiefs and sheriffs across the country oppose the CCRA because, in addition to broadly undermining public safety, it specifically endangers the lives of their officers. Law enforcement has no way to verify that someone presenting an out-of-state permit—or claiming to be a resident

of a state that requires no permit at all—is in-fact a law-abiding visitor to their state. As a result, this bill would turn interactions with out-of-state visitors, such as routine traffic stops, into dangerous situations for officers and civilians. Because of the dangers that this legislation poses to civilians and officers, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, and many other law enforcement agencies have spoken out vocally against it over the past several years.

Significantly, the CCRA would impose economic harm to New York businesses. If millions of out-of-state tourists are allowed to carry concealed weapons in the city, sports arenas, music venues, commercial buildings, and other public spaces and tourist attractions would become paralyzed with checkpoints and metal detectors.

In short, this is a dangerous piece of legislation. The Concealed Reciprocity Act of 2017 would supersede our state's highly effective gun laws, endanger the lives of New Yorkers and the law enforcement officers who work to protect us, and impose significant burdens on New York businesses. I implore that you vote against this perilous bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cyrus Vance". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.