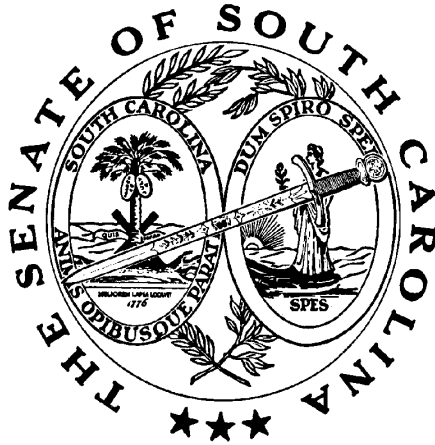


NO. 32

**JOURNAL**  
**OF THE**  
**SENATE**  
**OF THE**  
**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

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FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024

**Friday, March 1, 2024**  
**(Local Session)**

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

The Senate assembled at 11:00 A.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the ACTING PRESIDENT, Senator SETZLER.

**HOUSE BILL RETURNED**

The following House Bill was read the third time and ordered returned to the House with amendments:

H. 3355 -- Reps. Moss and Lawson: A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 56-5-4072 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A TOWING TRUCK WITH A FIFTH WHEEL ASSEMBLY MAY TOW ONE ADDITIONAL VEHICLE, TO PROVIDE A MAXIMUM LENGTH FOR THIS COMBINATION OF VEHICLES, TO PROVIDE THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT FOR THE FINAL TRAILING VEHICLE, AND TO PROVIDE A TRUCK OPERATING A TOWING COMBINATION MUST INCLUDE A VIDEO SYSTEM WHICH ALLOWS THE DRIVER TO MONITOR THE FINAL TRAILING VEHICLE AS IT IS BEING TOWED AND BE EQUIPPED WITH CERTAIN SAFETY DEVICES.

On motion of Senator PEELER.

**CO-SPONSOR ADDED**

The following co-sponsor was added to the respective Bill:

S. 994 Sen. Garrett

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator K. JOHNSON were ordered printed in the Journal of February 1, 2024:

**Remarks by Senator K. JOHNSON**

Members, you all have probably realized that I have been extremely quiet as we debated this Constitutional Carry Bill. I have been listening and just making some mental notes in my head and came up with a few things I want to emphasize.

I want to begin by saying that it has been noted on multiple occasions and highly recognized that the State of South Carolina has the best

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concealed weapon permit statute in the country, and I agree with that. I do support the Second Amendment. My family and I are all concealed weapon permit holders -- we all went through the classes together. I feel comfortable knowing that not only do we have guns, but we have the training, and we have the knowledge for these guns.

Now we are moving towards a free-for-all where people can have guns permit less and without training. I think that is a recipe for disaster for the State of South Carolina, especially when we have such a strong CWP statute in South Carolina. We are going to have people who don't understand guns, don't know how to store guns or how to be responsible with guns, and I'm not just referring to young adults. We have older adults who will not have the knowledge of how to be responsible gun owners because they won't be required to have the CWP training certification.

As Senator McLEOD said, I'm not in support of spending five to ten million dollars so people can go get training if they want it -- I think it should be required. I'm not a constitutional scholar but I believe we have constitutional rights that we are guaranteed, but also have strings attached to them. We have the right to vote but we have voter identification laws. I could say, "Hey, I have a constitutional right. I don't have to give you an I.D. I want to vote." We have the constitutional right to freedom of speech, but I was taught in high school that I can't go into a theater and yell "fire!" There are other constitutional rights where strings are attached. I heard someone ask, what about the other twenty-seven states? That argument doesn't move me because when I say I want to be like the other forty-eight states that have hate crime legislation, it doesn't influence many people.

I was talking to folks the other day, and I told them, "I don't like the fact that our CWP statute says you must be twenty-one years old to get a CWP. But with this law passing, you can be eighteen years old." Someone said back to me, "You can go in the army at eighteen years old, look at all the weapons they have." I told them, "When you go into the military, the first thing you are going to have is basic training, then you are going to have advanced training, and then throughout your whole military career you are going to be training on multiple different levels." I followed up by saying, "The weapons that eighteen year olds have in the military are in a controlled environment. The military doesn't give them weapons and allow them to move freely with those weapons." So, in my opinion, the argument of allowing an eighteen year old in the military to possess a weapon does not justify this legislation.

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Senator MALLOY talked about our experience one homecoming weekend when I was a freshman at the University of South Carolina, he mentioned David Simmons. If I'm correct, David Simmons is still walking around with a bullet in his neck. I know people who were shot and killed, who were not even the intended targets -- they just happened to be nearby. Innocent people dying because you have folks who can't utilize the gun properly. They have a gun, an issue arises, they pull it out, and just start aimlessly shooting. So innocent people and their families lives have been ruined due to improper usage and training of guns.

I keep hearing that our biggest industry in South Carolina is tourism. I think that if this Bill passes, it is going to be detrimental to our tourism industry. I don't know that many tourists are going to want to come to Myrtle Beach, Charleston or Hilton Head Island to vacation while we have people walking around with guns, and on top of that, having guns with no training or understanding of how the guns work. I'm not casting aspersions onto anyone but some of us know this is a bad Bill. I have heard some pretty good amendments that would strengthen the Bill, but just as soon as the amendment is explained by the author the amendment is voted down. We know this Bill is not necessary nor good for South Carolina, but I think that some of you believe that you don't have to worry about the pitfalls because it is not going to happen to you. I say that because I know there have been several Bills that have passed in South Carolina because they hit home to one of us, then we want to react rather than having been proactive. So, for those reasons and others that have been articulated, I look forward to voting against the Bill. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

On motion of Senator McLEOD, with unanimous consent, the remarks of Senator K. JOHNSON were ordered printed in the Journal.

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator STEPHENS were ordered printed in the Journal of February 1, 2024:

**Remarks by Senator STEPHENS**

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Thanks to my colleagues who over the past week, have sat and deliberated this Bill. I cannot sit back any longer and not express myself concerning open carry, the Constitutional Carry Act. My hometown of Bowman has a population of just under a thousand people. In May of 2020, we lost three high school students and

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five others. Three of them died, five were injured, and all three that died were high school students. On April 4, 2022, there was a Bowman woman shot to death and a Bowman man injured. On February 3, 2022, a forty-two year old Bowman man was shot to death. On August 23, 2023, a forty-two year old man was shot to death. On October 20, 2023, a Bowman man was critically injured. Those are a few shooting incidents that occurred in that small town in the last three years. There were many other shootings, but by God's grace those individuals survived.

I have no disregard for anyone's Second Amendment Rights. I too have guns which are in my possession at home, safely stored away and I have been trained. However, my feelings today are that there are major disadvantages to open carry that may lead to a higher risk of accidental death. I believe also that when guns are being displayed the possibility of stress by someone else in proximity of that gun -- strange things can happen. Strange things happen in the lives of children wanting to play with guns, because mom and dad are now allowed to have guns readily available. To my colleagues KEVIN JOHNSON, I truly believe that a couple seconds makes a lot of difference in whether a person lives or dies. I believe that if a gun is in a glove compartment that is locked, or in a console that may be locked -- those couple of seconds could prove fatal. Those couple of seconds could be just enough to calm that individual down who want to go and get that gun and probably take someone's life. Everybody is not comfortable carrying a gun. Everybody is not trained to carry a gun or to use a gun. If the gun is mishandled or misused, it could result in the life of someone innocently ending.

Open carry, I believe, makes you a target. As mentioned earlier, it makes it seem like this is the wild, wild west. I heard Senator ADAMS mention that when he was at the ATM machine, a couple guys came running up. He pulled up his shirt or his jacket and saw his gun. There is a flip side to that story, as I believe, it could have been the other two people that had guns as well. Therefore, it could have been exchange of gunfire with multiple persons injured or even killed. The accessibility of guns is dangerous. The inability to understand and to use guns properly is dangerous. I don't believe in this State that we should go down this road. I believe if you listen to the masses of citizens of the State of South Carolina they will tell you. They will tell you that I want my Second Amendment Rights, but I want to make sure that the other person understands as well as I do, that I need to be very careful in the brandishing of my gun. Brandishing is no more than standing there with

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your gun on your side, careful use of the gun and understanding the effects. It is a sad day for me in this State. May not be for a lot of you, but it is a sad day for me when we legislate such topics that will put many others in harm's way, and we are saying we are doing right by our people or by our citizens. I think just the opposite. It is time that we come to the realization that some of what we are doing is not the best interest of the citizens of South Carolina. I don't want to bring racism into the scenario, but it is here. I believe our police should be protectors. I believe what we had earlier will do just that, but now we are opening up where they feel insecure. Yes, I have had the opportunity to speak with police chiefs, county sheriffs as well as deputies and they all fear this piece of legislation. These are the people who are out there on a day-to-day basis. They know what is going on, but are we listening to a great degree? No. So, then are we advocating for those individuals who sent us here to voice their concerns? I would answer that question and say no. It is high time, ladies and gentlemen, that we do just that. With that being said, I cannot in my right mind go back to my community and say that I voted yes for this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

On motion of Senator WILLIAMS, with unanimous consent, the remarks of Senator STEPHENS were ordered printed in the Journal.

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator RANKIN were ordered printed in the Journal of February 1, 2024:

**Remarks by Senator RANKIN**

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the Senate. Yesterday might have been the longest day we've had here in quite a while, and I'll assure you my intention is not to belabor this day longer than it takes me to share a few comments with you about this Bill. I want to commend Senator MARTIN on his persistence and the pressing and the persuading, and it's about to create policy -- at least of this Senate. I want to go back just a moment with you all as the chair of the committee that was blessed to have this Bill -- rest in it, and the efforts by Senator MARTIN to dislodge this Bill from that committee over the last year or two. Senator MARTIN said he's been working on this for fifteen years. I started paying attention to this Bill when it became a Judiciary Committee assignment, and lo those many years ago Senator GOLDFINCH was the subcommittee chairman within the Judiciary Committee itself that was going to have a

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subcommittee meeting the very next day. By persuasion -- I'll call it pouncing -- at a perfect opportunity with my absence by going to see my daughter in Greenville at the Governor's School -- sensing she needed a parent -- I leave and roll to Greenville and I'm listening to the Senate as the weird folk in this Body do when we're not here and if you say you don't do it, you are not being honest. But I hear the effort to dislodge and recall that Bill from the full Judiciary Committee that passed narrowly, and it thus did not have a subcommittee hearing that next day. Again, that was within his right to do; so, I compliment him for that persistence. We'll talk here in a moment about what we have done thereafter and given it our due diligence and tried to hear from folks as best we could.

But that was then, and we come to another session where Senator MARTIN, to his credit -- he dutifully writes to all as we all do to those that chair committees and he requests to have the Bill assigned and considered. So, we did that last year -- those of you recall who served on that subcommittee. And Senator M. JOHNSON conducted a wonderfully balanced and fair hearing of this Bill. I will point out to you all that there was another Bill assigned to that subcommittee, which was the stand-alone Bill, now Senator CAMPSSEN'S amendment which we rejected 24 to 19. And that Bill was to give us what we have uniformly heard from law enforcement, that which they wanted and that which they asked for -- **enhanced penalties on gun law violations**. That Bill last year in that subcommittee, in the discretion of the subcommittee itself, and I'm not assailing their work, but they did not take that Bill up. They focused solely on the Bill that we have before us, and that being the grand bargain that includes something that no one in law enforcement has asked for and no one in law enforcement wants. That is this permitless carry Bill. And so, we have labored these last few days, hours and hours and hours, talking about the balance between our state's current law and where some wanted to take us, and some did not. But we have heard from lobbying groups how we are an outlier in the country, how we are trading on the rights of our law-abiding citizens, and we are sacrificing our people compared to other states. I have heard from several of you -- you've all gotten door hangers -- perhaps, saying, "I am a gun rights sellout." Perhaps some of you other Senators are too. "I am one who is against the Constitution because of my position. I am against your God-given and inalienable rights given to you at birth because I support **not** their politics but our **police**." So, forgive me for not standing with those who are from Austin, Texas. I don't think I have any constituents in

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Austin, Texas. This leaflet last year from the Young Americans for Liberty, 32 Brody Suite, 107-65 -- I've never been to Austin. I don't think I've ever met a Young American for Liberty. No offense to anybody else, Senator M. JOHNSON, that's got the liberty placard or lapel pin. I've never met anybody from Austin, Texas.

I wonder whether just like the dark money mailers that you've all gotten -- I know of a few, where one was addressed from a place in the upstate. When we sent somebody to find out what was at that address, it was an empty building beside a pawn shop. We found out through the owner of that strip shopping center he had never heard of and had never rented to that group mailing out things to my area saying "Rankin is the worst thing since COVID. Rankin caused the pandemic. Rankin is standing in your way of freedom." That's fine, folks. I'm not assailing our first amendment rights to do or say about anybody -- whatever you want to do or say but be a little more honest about it. But you don't have to be because you get to hide behind the dark money and the group efforts that come to push and pull us to do what they want us to do. That's fine. I'm a big boy. I can withstand the assaults, and I have been there, done that before. Perhaps this will be my last stand, and perhaps this time the dark money will win and perhaps this time the outside politics of pushing us to do something will work. But I rest easy. I rest comfortably, and I rest at night knowing that I am standing **not** with the persuaders, **not** with the pushers, but I'm standing with the **police officers** in this State who to a person, to an agency, to a department within this State has said to me uniformly -- today included after what we adopted last night -- and I voted for the amendment, trying to make a better Bill in hopes of giving the police officers cover -- to say Rankin, we're for it, today with these enhancements that we have tried to make. I haven't heard a police officer say to me yet, Luke, we want it. We're asking for it. My point being even today -- concerns, concerns, concerns, concerns. We're muddying the water. We're not clarifying for them. Same thing with the former police officer retired now -- our brother in the Senate and others today, the former solicitor -- we are not creating clarity. We are creating uncertainty. We are creating more of a morass of who knows what you can do, and to accomplish what? To make us like the other states who the proponents say, we want to be just like.

So, I'm up here again just to talk a little bit about this, and if I can, Mr. Clerk, Mr. PRESIDENT, I want to just show four folks that I want you to be reminded of. Let me start with Conway City Police Chief. That is Chief Long of Conway. I'm not going to read verbatim their testimonies.



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We can't under our rules play their testimony, but I want you just to see their face and not mine. I don't want my face to be the voice of the opposition that I've heard from and I daresay the faceless people in Austin, Texas, that aren't going to come here to tell you what the people that we have hired and entrusted to carry out the laws that **we** pass have said. First voice -- again, the face belongs to Chief Long. He's been in law enforcement since 1986. He respects our State. He's a product of our State, born and raised here and prides himself on being a South Carolinian. He points to that balance between our laws, our rights and law abiding gun ownership and gun safety for their families. His belief, and this was a pretty key term, I thought, that I had never heard before: "my belief is that in our community we all operate under a guideline of **social contracts**". Y'all on that subcommittee, you've heard this and again, and you're not going to hear a total regurgitation. He analogized that social contract to the driver's license that we have, and we're tested to see whether we have safe driving proficiency -- hunter safety as well. The goal being what the Senator from Charleston talked about the other day with the quail hunter, the dove shoot, loading the gun, where do you aim the gun? All folks within the hunting world, the driving world and now the boating world have to have training and operate under the same guidelines. So, his point, again, was the benefit of and the necessity of the requirement of minimum standard training. Again, I'm not going to talk about all these things we talked about but again the law. What is the law? Where can you possess? Where can you present? When do you have to stand down? When under the castle doctrine, when under the various other iterations of "stand your ground", but more importantly, what training do they have to safely operate that gun? So, his point -- without training, people will take for granted, I'm allowed, I can do what I want to do and so that social contract whether hunting, boating, driving, pick your other example -- that's our obligation.

The next picture is Chief Prock from the City of Myrtle Beach. Again, very forceful personality, very forceful statements she made -- that public safety is a **shared responsibility**, and that our role, just like theirs in our communities -- our entrusting them, charging them to carry it out -- it is a shared responsibility, and her position on this Bill was that the training that they pursued, and y'all heard it -- we've heard it over and over again in here: train, train, train, four times a year. SLED talked about the various guns that they use, and how they train. So, we are effectively, with the passage of this Bill, holding our lay folk, our everyday folk to a totally different standard than we expect out of our

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law enforcement officers. Her point is, we are asking that the public no longer to be required to train, yet we will expect the same result out of them. They aren't going to train. They don't have to train -- and so, her view, again, the City of Myrtle Beach's Police Chief is the rights and freedoms of everyone are supported but the safety of our communities needs to be at the forefront.

The next face that I want you just to momentarily focus on, this is Chief Stewart, representing the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association, and focus on what I've heard and you all have heard, that our SLED Director Chief Keel has said, "We are the envy of the country with the law that we currently have, and the ability to protect not only the public but to protect law enforcement." But they train. He references the four types of weapons they train with and that they train day and night. And the shots fired discussion -- I had not heard of that before that subcommittee hearing in Anderson, I believe. They've got that program. Technology, again, the area where the shots were fired -- they key in on it with other technology cameras. Again, the ability to try to get to an area quicker -- that are enhancements to the safety of our communities. And not just them but the safety of the police officers as well. So, his point, again, in unison with the other two chiefs of police, is that we need to be able to expect the same out of our law-abiding citizens -- the proficiency in how to handle a gun.

And then finally, last picture. That is Skip Holbrook, Columbia Police Chief. Very briefly, the takeaway from him -- uncharted and unclear territory if we pass this law -- personal concern as a citizen and concern from a police chief's perspective. No training requirement, no minimum standard will do nothing but lead to chaos, and increased danger to them. That's all from the slides, Mr. PRESIDENT. Thank you for displaying those.

So, who are we listening to and what is our goal? I'm not saying the word "cave", Senator HUTTO. That's an adjective. Perhaps it applies, but just like these officers have said, we are coming at this with the best of intentions. I don't malign the proponents of this Bill. I don't malign the folks from Austin, Texas. Your desire was to come into South Carolina and do successfully what you have done with money in other states. But who are we to hear from and who are we to believe if we don't believe these faces, these voices? And dare I say a few more because in Horry County, as I referenced the other day, a letter from the Law Enforcement Officers Association dated December 5<sup>th</sup> -- and I can't read it here but let me just highlight: the repeal would remove the very

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standard we have in this State to keep our community and visitors safe. Requirements for training and background checks alone provide a framework to assist in the lawful use of weapons and their purchase and possession. They oppose in the strongest possible terms, for reasons of public safety -- our doing away with required training in this Bill. I have said it from my desk. I won't read every name, but I dare say to anyone who would like to see -- not one of the misguided, misinformed but duly elected, duly appointed, duly hired and continuing in service with their own training officers from Horry and Georgetown Counties who have said, "Folks, keep the minimum standards". That's the law enforcement world.

Again, who do I hear? Who do I listen to? Who do you hear? Who should you listen to? That's your own walk. That's up to you. I dare say I don't intend to or believe that I'm going to persuade one vote different than has been cast thus far, but I think we owe it to the people outside in our homes, in the balcony, and those listening -- perhaps the twelve of you that are listening to us right now -- we owe the honest truth to them about what we're about to do and what it's going to do and own it.

Now, the reverse of that is, "Rankin, it isn't going to be that bad. It ain't going to be that bad. Pay no attention to them." The reference to the Wizard of Oz the other day, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. Listen to the big bad wolf out there. The big bad Oz out there. Pay attention to him, so that the big bad wolf out there tells us it ain't going to be that bad. They're not that many. It's not going to be that big of a problem. Law enforcement will get over it. They'll work it through. It will work out. It ain't that big of a deal."

And this is not Luke Rankin, anti-second amendment right. I believe in it. I don't but my wife does have a CWP. Any of you who know Lindsay would not be any more surprised to know that. Not Annie get your gun; Lindsay get your gun. Lindsey doesn't need a gun -- but I hunt, my brother hunts. I love the right to bear arms. But to the point that -- I'm not going to go through this ad nauseam but the point that the reality of this Bill being called something suggesting that anyone daring to say or question or pause in the adoption of it -- that it is a constitutional right that we are infringing upon by insisting on law enforcement being given the tools that they so deathly and fatally and desperately are calling for is not an abridgment of the Constitution. Chief Justice Massey from Edgefield quoted, Chief Justice Harpootlian from Richland, again, discussing the very case perhaps -- I don't know if it was this one with Anthony Scalia, but the Supreme Court says, you have a right --

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effectively like Chief Long said, a social contract. The law requires certain things out of you. The Constitution requires the allowance of certain things. But they are not mutually exclusive, and so the Supreme Court has defined with precedent the right to do what we have done before. So, the law doesn't say it's unconstitutional to keep South Carolina's existing CWP. If that were so, folks, if this were the unconstitutional carry Bill, why hasn't it been overturned since we passed it twenty some years ago? Why hasn't someone from Texas come down here to challenge the constitutional veracity of that law twenty years ago? It is because it isn't unconstitutional. And so, no aspersions to those who believe this is a constitutional right. Some of you know better that the Constitution doesn't say – “no states, you don't have a social contract and no states you can't require.”

I'm going to wrap up here in just a second. I want to harken back to an exchange with Senator MASSEY and my sincere endorsement of -- I stated from my desk as I was asking him, the laudable goal of training and the laudable goal of giving the officers the ability to assess before they get into a mess with someone bearing -- and that is the topic of training. So, we are undoing the requirement. We're going from twenty-one to eighteen. Some are offended by that on its face. Perhaps that's not as bad as the fearful folk would suspect. The federal government allows twenty-one so there's a little difference -- excuse me eighteen versus twenty-one. I don't see that as a big problem. But what is the biggest offense here and the biggest problem that officers tell me -- will mean they will suffer loss of lives -- is the lack of mandatory training. So my exchange with the Senator from Edgefield, I will remind y'all, after doing away with their laws, just like we are on the cusp of doing here, despite our effort to incentivize with a carrot or a stick -- the real reality will be you will see a dramatic decline in those who will say, “the law doesn't require me to do it but I'm going to do it any way.” I'm not assailing those who will hereafter not want to do it under the belief that that's not the law, therefore they don't have to abide by it. Good people, smart people, will do it any way. Smart, good people already, with their families, have great training. I'm sure.

But when passed in other states, folks in terms of those seeking training: Georgia drops off 60%, Oklahoma 54%, Texas 43%, Florida 64%, Ohio 71% and Tennessee 53%. I voted for that amendment because I think that makes this Bill better, but it does not speak to the minimum requirements being a requirement. We are hoping that people will be their best. We are hoping that people will be as trained as our law

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enforcement officers are, but that's a big hope, folks. It's a big bet. Perhaps time will prove that there will be no problems with a lack of training, but you can't ignore in those states that have passed this and the incidents -- increased incidents of homicide and gun-related violence and gun-related injury; you cannot escape the trajectory of those statistics. Look around. Has it worked? What do you look to to determine how has it worked? So, either the stats are wrong -- in Indiana where press coverage says, "over the stern objections of law enforcement," and that is the statement in the press release -- stern objections, stern criticism from their state Police Superintendent, they did it anyway. And in Indiana handgun licenses and training dropped.

So, "Rankin, you're ignoring half of the gain here. You're ignoring the win here." The Governor, again, in the State of the State last week asked for what? Enhanced penalties -- he didn't ask for open carry without permit. Senator CAMPSER asked this Body for enhanced penalties of repeat offenders with gun violations. Twenty-four of you said no, nineteen said yes. So, we've got now effectively, respectfully, but honestly a gun to our heads to pass a Bill to give law enforcement something they **don't want, haven't asked for** in exchange for something they **desperately need**. That is a prerogative of a legislative body. Give them not what **they want**; give them what **we want**.

So, when we pass this Bill and go to our homes and talk to neighbors -- brothers and sisters in churches, in our home communities, but more importantly is that police view, the sheriffs' offices -- ask them where were they? Why didn't they come to Columbia when hearings were taking place. Why didn't they come tell you that they were for it? But more important to me in Horry County, why didn't you come tell me why you were for it. Where were you? By default, the only four cases I've got, two in my area, one in Anderson and one in Columbia, took the time and took it upon themselves to say what you know in your heart of hearts is the truth -- "You are jeopardizing us, hamstringing us, cramming something down our throats legally that we don't know how to enforce. You have not clarified anything. You're muddying the water, and now asking me, Mr. and Mrs. law enforcement officer to step into a situation where I don't know who is on my side and put myself at risk of harm, injury or death" and expect what the chief said -- the same results of their training, their expert repetitive, continuing good education out of somebody that from now on won't have one iota -- nothing other than their self-motivation to learn to do and be safe. God, I pray that everyone who picks up a gun will do just that. To the CWP holders, forty some

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odd thousand, God bless you for the training. I hope I'm wrong, and the stats in South Carolina prove differently, that we have truly incentivized. But I will be shocked if it is the case.

So, folks, I'm going to wrap up and urge you, not to vote the way Luke Rankin votes, but talk to your officers. Again, I make the point about every law enforcement officer I saw come to Columbia to testify. I don't know whether they were under oath or not. Would their testimony be any different? Are they recognizing the political expediency and is it going to jeopardize them? If they'll tell you straight, like the sheriffs have done and the police chiefs have done, Senators, you know they are not going to be happy, because what we've done is not listened to them. We are going to stand with our men in blue, stand with our women in blue. Folks, we stand with them **only** when it is convenient. We listen to them **only** when it is convenient. That is a travesty in our State. We want to hear from you when it is convenient. We don't want to give you what you want unless it is convenient. Folks, we are putting our best in blue in harm's way and making them take something they don't want and have not asked for. That is our choice. We all get a vote.

God bless this country and God bless my ability to come speak to each of y'all. God bless those who we are here to reward and to stand by. To me, that is **my law enforcement**, that is **my police chief** and that is my **sheriff** from Horry County -- not from Texas.

On motion of Senator JACKSON, with unanimous consent, the remarks of Senator RANKIN were ordered printed in the Journal.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:06 A.M., on motion of Senator SHEALY, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 12:00 Noon.

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