



Minnesota House Government Finance & Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

March 3, 2025

Chair Klevorn, Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus, the trusted voice of Minnesota's law-abiding gun owners working to defend and restore the right to keep and bear arms, we respectfully submit this letter in strong opposition to HF 3357.

HF 3357 would prohibit lawful carry of firearms at the Minnesota State Capitol Complex by individuals who possess a valid Minnesota Permit to Carry and who have complied with every requirement of state law.

It is important to note that it is already a crime to possess or carry a firearm at the Minnesota State Capitol Complex without a Minnesota Permit to Carry. With weapons screening in place, bad actors carrying dangerous weapons cannot enter the core buildings of the state capitol.

**This proposal does not target violent criminals. It targets peaceable citizens.**

Minnesota operates under a statewide Permit to Carry framework that establishes uniform standards for individuals exercising their right to carry firearms for self-defense.

Permit holders must:

- Pass a background check
- Complete certified training
- Meet statutory eligibility requirements

These individuals are statistically among the most law-abiding segments of our population. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's own reporting demonstrates that permit holders commit crimes at extremely low rates.

HF 3357 would strip these vetted citizens of their ability to exercise self-defense rights precisely where they gather to petition their government.

### **The Capitol Complex Is Not an Ordinary Location**

The Minnesota State Capitol Complex is not a private venue or a correctional facility. It is the seat of democratic participation.



It is where Minnesotans:

- Attend hearings
- Testify before committees
- Meet with legislators
- Engage in public advocacy
- Exercise their First Amendment rights

Conditioning civic participation on surrendering the right to self-defense sends the wrong message about who government trusts — and who it does not.

Peaceable citizens should not be required to disarm in order to engage with their elected representatives.

### **Criminals Will Not Comply**

Individuals intent on violence do not comply with signage or statutory prohibitions. A location-based prohibition does not disarm criminals. It disarms only those who already follow the law.

Minnesota already prohibits violent felons and other disqualified persons from possessing firearms. If enforcement and accountability are the concern, the answer lies in prosecution and intervention against those who pose actual threats — not in restricting vetted permit holders.

### **Claims Regarding “Heightened Tensions” at the Capitol**

We anticipate that supporters of HF 3357 will argue that firearms increase the risk of violence during hearings involving controversial or emotionally charged legislation.

That claim does not reflect reality at the Minnesota State Capitol.

For more than two decades, the Minnesota State Capitol Complex has hosted robust debate on deeply contentious issues — including firearms policy — while lawful Permit to Carry holders have been present under Minnesota law.

During that time, there has not been a pattern of violence caused by lawful permit holders attending hearings or engaging in civic participation.

In fact, there has been **none**.

Permit holders are not the source of disorder at the Capitol. They are background-checked, trained, and statistically among the most law-abiding citizens in the state.



In contrast, what we have observed over the years — including as recently as this past week — is that our staff, volunteers, and testifiers have faced threats and intimidation from individuals claiming to support additional firearm restrictions. Similar incidents have occurred during previous legislative sessions when controversial gun-control measures were being debated.

The reality is that contentious public hearings can generate strong emotions on all sides. That is precisely why citizens should retain the lawful means of self-defense when participating in the democratic process.

Disarming peaceable members of the public does not eliminate tension. It does not deter individuals intent on misconduct. It does not enhance security against those who ignore the law. It simply removes the ability of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves in a public setting.

*It is unconscionable to deprive citizens of their lawful means of self-defense at the very place where they exercise their First Amendment rights and engage with their government.*

HF 3357:

- Disarms peaceable, law-abiding, background-checked permit holders
- Restricts self-defense rights at the seat of public participation
- Fails to address violent criminals
- Raises significant constitutional concerns

Public safety is a serious responsibility. Expanding firearm prohibitions against peaceable citizens does not meaningfully address violent offenders. It instead restricts those who have demonstrated their commitment to lawful conduct.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote NO on HF 3357.

Sincerely,

Bryan Strawser  
Chair

Anna Leamy  
Director, Government Relations & Advocacy