

ADVERTISEMENT

**The  
Economist**

Subscribe

≡ Menu

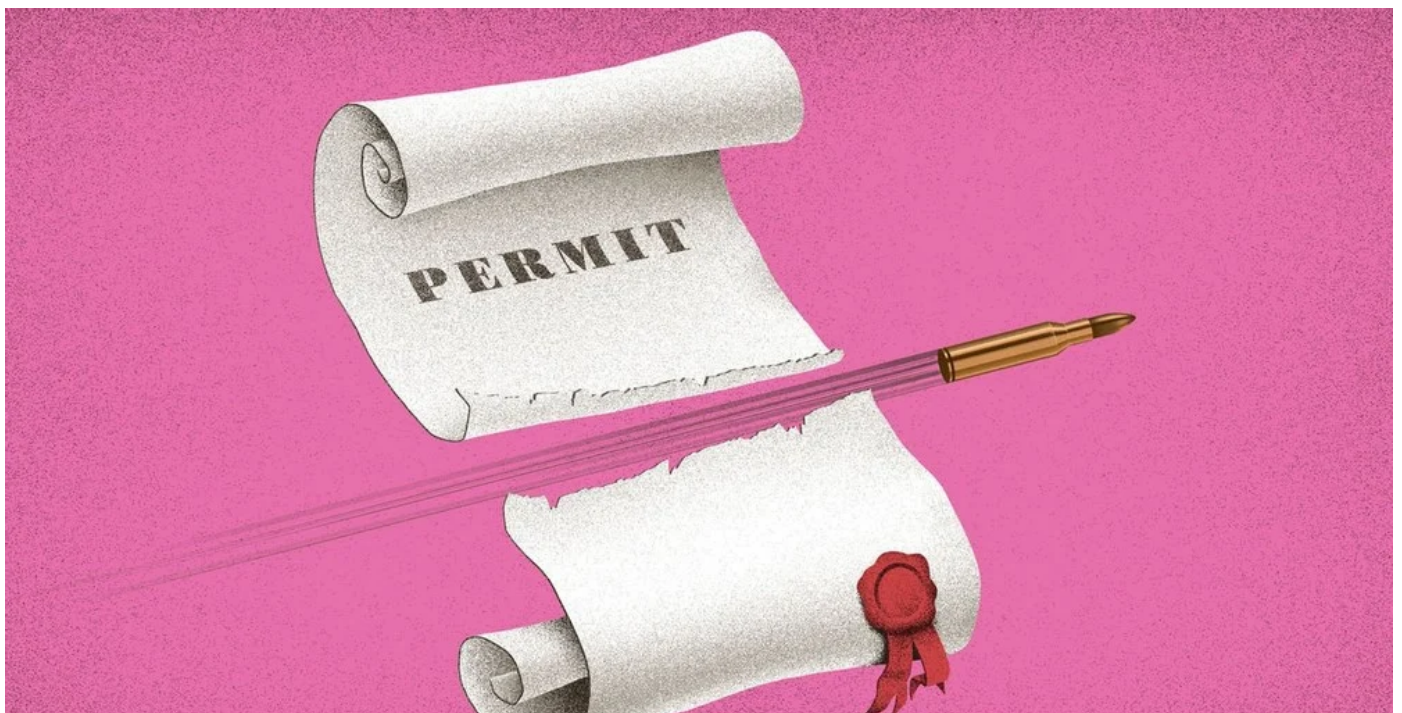
**Leaders**

May 8th 2021 edition

Bearing harms

# Permitless-carry gun laws are misguided and should be scrapped

More states are falling for an extremist take on the Second Amendment



May 8th 2021



EVERY AMERICAN state requires you to have a licence to drive a car, hunt or become a barber. Yet by the end of this year at least 20 states will allow you to carry a handgun in public without a permit. So far in 2021 five have already passed “permitless carry” laws, and five more, including Texas and Louisiana, are considering them. If these became law, around a third of Americans would live in states where it was legal to carry guns around without any need for a licence or training.

Anyone who considers the 181 mass shootings that have taken place in America since January, or the recent spike in violent crime, would be forgiven for wondering why some states want fewer restrictions on guns, rather than more. The pro-gun lobby, including the National Rifle Association (NRA), argues that having more armed civilians will help boost public safety, making it more likely that “good guys” with guns can intercept “bad guys” with guns. With the help of Republican state legislators, they are advancing an interpretation of the Second Amendment which imagines that America’s founders intended no restrictions

Already signed up? [Log in](#)

## What happens next?

Navigate an uncertain world with *The Economist*

---

### 50% off your first 12 weeks


[View subscription options](#) →

*Cancel at any time*

---

- ✓ The app and economist.com—distinctively distilled analysis
  - ✓ Digital newsletters—curated topical opinion
  - ✓ Audio version & podcasts—immersive listening
  - ✓ The digital archive—all our content since 1997
  - ✓ Webinars and conferences—intelligent debate and informed analysis
  - ✓ Flagship franchises—The World in and 1843 magazine
  - ✓ Give up to five free articles per month
- 

 **NewsGuard**

 This website adheres to all nine of NewsGuard's standards of credibility and transparency.

OR

### Continue reading this article



CHECKS AND BALANCE

# The best of our coverage of American politics

Delivered to your inbox every Friday

example@email.com

Sign up

## More from Leaders



Luca D'Urbino

[The rise of e-money](#)

## The digital currencies that matter

---

[Time's up](#)

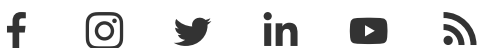
Warren Buffett should step aside for his chosen successor

[A state of one's own](#)

Somaliland deserves international recognition

[Subscribe](#)[Reuse our content](#)[Group subscriptions](#)[Help and contact us](#)

---

[Keep updated](#)

Published since September 1843 to take part in “*a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward, and an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing our progress.*”

---

## The Economist

About

Advertise

Press centre

## The Economist Group

The Economist Group

The Economist Intelligence Unit

The Economist Events

The Economist Store

Careers

Which MBA?

GMAT Tutor

GRE Tutor

Executive Jobs

Executive Education Navigator

Executive Education

---

[Terms of Use](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookie Policy](#) [Manage Cookies](#) [Accessibility](#) [Modern Slavery Statement](#)

[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright © The Economist Newspaper Limited 2021. All rights reserved.