

The intended interpretation of the Second Amendment has long been a harshly divided issue in U.S. politics. The Supreme Court's shut down of New York's "proper cause" gun law in June of this year (2022) only added fuel to this fiery debate. The ruling "fundamentally changes the legal landscape for gun laws," according to Hannah Hill of the National Foundation for Gun Rights [1]. On one side of Capitol Hill, the Republican party is celebrating this win; on the other side, Democrats are worried about this change in interpretation of the Second Amendment. The case in question, New York State Rifle and Pistol Association (NYSRPA) v. Bruen, was in response to New York's law that required a license to conceal carry weapons in public places [2]. New York's conceal carry law is very similar to laws in other politically similar states, such as Massachusetts and California. The ruling deemed such laws unconstitutional stating in their official ruling that "Nothing in the Second Amendment's text draws a home/public distinction with respect to the right to keep and bear arms, and the definition of 'bear' naturally encompasses public carry" [3]. There is no doubt that this new interpretation of the Second Amendment will have sweeping ramifications across the country.

Massachusetts is notorious for its strict gun laws and is often praised for having tight control over such a controversial issue [4]. However, this stance places MA in the middle of the current debate over the Supreme Court's NYSRPA v. Bruen ruling. Internally, Massachusetts legislators and attorneys are head-to-head in conversation over the state's firearm regulations. A mere three weeks after the Supreme Court's ruling in June, the MA Senate passed a bill "that seeks to respond to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last month that struck down a New York gun-control law" [5]. Additionally, MA District Attorney and Governor candidate Maura Healey is adamant that the NY ruling will severely impact Massachusetts [6]. Her office also determined that the Supreme Court's interpretation directly affects Massachusetts' "good reason" law, which had similar regulations as that of the law shot down in New York [6]. In response, Healey's office is beginning to issue unrestricted licenses to carry to persons who are not a "prohibited person" or "unsuitable" [6]. Despite these harsh ramifications, Massachusetts did limit the impact of the NYSRPA ruling; legislators remain firm that persons in MA must possess a license to carry and that authorities may ask questions to license applicants about their motive for possessing a firearm [6].

In May of this year, I applied for my Firearms Identification Card (FID) in Massachusetts. It was issued without any problems, but current events have prompted me to think a lot about the current laws in MA regarding firearms. Under MA law, an FID "permits the purchase, possession, and transportation of non-large-capacity rifles, shotguns and ammunition" [7] and person can apply for an FID or License to Carry (LTC) at ages 18 and 21 respectively. Personally, I applied for my FID so that I could more easily obtain an LTC when I turn 21 (September 2023), as the process is typically quicker if applicants already hold a valid FID. This debate surrounding conceal carry regulations in states like New York and Massachusetts will have a direct effect on me when I do obtain my LTC. Previously, MA residents were required to possess a separate conceal carry permit in addition to an LTC, but that is now deemed

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unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. I will be paying extremely close attention to Massachusetts' response to this new precedent over the next year before I apply for an LTC.

It is without question that the Supreme Court's NYSRPA ruling had monumental effects within New York's borders, but the federal ruling is having a sweeping effect across the country in states with similar laws. Massachusetts is New York's twin when it comes to gun laws and consequently is directly affected by this new precedent. I plan to apply for my LTC in MA in about a year, which will be one year and three months after the ruling in NY; I am interested to see how this ruling will affect my rights and my application process. The ruling has already prompted legislative change in MA regarding its concealed carry regulations, but I suspect there will be many more modifications to laws in response to the heated debate across the country.

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