

# Gun-toting Pruett isn't doing Idahoans any favors

**Marty Trillaase/Lewiston Tribune**

Allowing Idahoans to carry concealed weapons without a permit may satisfy the political ambitions of the fellow pushing that idea, Idaho Second Amendment Alliance President Greg Pruett.

But what about the ordinary concealed weapon-carrying citizen?

Pruett has been pushing to eliminate the permitting process that involves background checks and screening out those who have forfeited their rights to gun ownership - convicted felons, the mentally ill and people who have been dishonorably discharged from the armed services.

The process also requires concealed weapon permit applicants to undergo some training.

That's a far cry from an earlier era, when you had to persuade law enforcement to issue a concealed weapons permit. Today, if a sheriff wants to refuse to issue a permit, he needs to give cause.

It's not enough for Pruett, who argues this is about the Second Amendment's guarantee to keep and bear arms.

"The ISAA's main goal is to align Idaho laws with the true meaning of the Second Amendment," he told the Idaho State Journal's Greg Eichelberger. "Criminals do not obey laws or obtain permits. Law-abiding citizens should not be burdened with an unnecessary permitting process, which has no effect on criminal activity."

Earlier this year, Pruett wore out his welcome with conservative lawmakers, such as House State Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Loertcher, R-Iona. Even the National Rifle Association broke with Pruett during this year's legislative session.

He ended up with half a loaf. Legislators passed a new law that says no concealed weapons permit is required outside city limits.

Pruett is back, angling for a total repeal - and his organization is staging rallies across the state, including one held Friday at Lewiston. Next year, he'll have the political winds at his back. Every lawmaker is up for re-election and not one of them wants to be scored as a Second Amendment lightweight.

Does any of this make anyone safer?

Probably not.

In a crisis such as the mass shooting that occurred Thursday at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Ore., cops can't tell the difference between good guys with guns and bad guys with guns.

All they see are guns.

Besides, cops and soldiers constantly hone their reflexes with the kind of shoot-don't shoot or dynamic training held at Lewis-Clark State College last June. In a crisis, that's what it takes to overcome the human body's physiological reaction to danger and stress.

A handful of hours spent in class or target shooting doesn't come close to preparing a civilian - who is just as likely to get hurt or injure someone else.

But at least today, when a cop makes a traffic stop, he can check the license plates against a database and learn immediately whether the driver has a permit to carry a concealed weapon. Then, he can act accordingly.

Take away that knowledge, and every cop has to treat everyone he sees as potentially armed - and therefore a potential threat.

How does that serve the interests of the law-abiding gun owner?

You can count on those same cops asking Idaho lawmakers to follow the lead of other states by making it a crime not to disclose the presence of a concealed weapon to any officer. They would seek stiff penalties - say a misdemeanor conviction, a 30-day jail sentence and a \$1,000 fine.

Then what?

Some people get rattled by traffic stops. When they see a cop, their judgment gets impaired. Maybe they'll decide to take their chances and keep quiet about the gun under the car seat.

It's not smart, but people often behave stupidly with cops.

Before you know it, Idahoans who had no problem with their state's lenient concealed weapons permit system are facing a judge on a misdemeanor.

Before Idaho goes down that path, ask Pruetts how any of this is supposed to help you.