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November 29, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
U.S. Senate Majority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate Republican Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Attorney General Opposition To S. 2188, "The National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act" (Begich-Manchin) and S. 2213, "The Respecting States Rights and Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act" (Thune-Vitter)

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Republican Leader McConnell:

We write to respectfully urge you and your caucuses to oppose S. 2188, "The National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act" and S. 2213, "The Respecting States Rights and Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act." These two bills would force states to recognize concealed carry permits issued by any other states, even those with poor oversight and weaker permitting standards. These bills would create a lowest common denominator approach to public safety that would endanger police and make it more difficult to prosecute gun traffickers.

S. 2188 and S. 2213 trample on states' rights by overriding our states' legislative and regulatory authority to determine who can – and who cannot – carry hidden and loaded guns in public. For example, many states have established standards that go beyond federal law in order to keep concealed weapons out of the hands of violent misdemeanants, alcohol abusers, teenagers, and people who have not completed basic safety training. S. 2188 and S. 2213 would gut this framework, and impose the weakest state permitting and verification standards on all other states.

Under current law, states are free to enter into, refuse, or revoke concealed carry reciprocity agreements with other states. These agreements are often contingent on states having comparable permitting standards. For example, authorities in Nevada and New Mexico made the decision to stop recognizing carry permits issued by Utah, which does not require live-fire instruction as part of its training requirements. Nevada has also ended reciprocity with Florida, which only requires individuals to renew their permits every seven years. States would lose this discretion under forced reciprocity.

As Attorneys General, we are most troubled by the threat to public safety posed by local law enforcement's inability to promptly verify out-of-state permits. Contrary to claims by proponents of national concealed carry reciprocity legislation, varying state standards make it nearly impossible for our law enforcement agencies to quickly determine if a carry permit from another state is valid. This further jeopardizes the safety of police and the public. In addition, there is no comprehensive national database or inquiry system that alerts law enforcement officers when a concealed carry permit is counterfeit, expired, or has recently been revoked.

In fact, some states also fail to adequately track their own permit issuances and revocations. The Georgia Bureau of Investigations has confirmed it cannot determine when a state permit-holder breaks the law; recently enacted Wisconsin law prohibits law enforcement from accessing permitting information during traffic stops or for purposes of investigating potential criminal activity; and Florida issued permits to more than 1,400 people who previously pleaded guilty or no contest to felonies, 216 people with outstanding warrants, 128 people with active domestic violence injunctions, and six registered sex offenders.

The police officers in our states are already putting their lives on the line when they stop potentially dangerous individuals on the street. Forcing these officers to conduct traffic stops and other police activity with no ability to authenticate every other state's carry permits would pose an extraordinary and unnecessary risk.

Forced reciprocity is opposed by national organizations including: the International Association of Chiefs of Police; the Major Cities Chiefs Association, representing the police chiefs of 62 major U.S. cities; the National Network to End Domestic Violence, representing 56 state and territorial domestic violence coalitions; the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; as well as various state law enforcement associations and law enforcement leaders. Forced reciprocity is also opposed by Mayors Against Illegal Guns, a bipartisan coalition of more than 650 mayors who collectively represent 54 million Americans.

We urge you to stand up for America's law enforcement community and oppose S. 2188 and S. 2213.

Sincerely,

**Eric T. Schneiderman
New York Attorney General**

**Kamala D. Harris
California Attorney General**

**George Jepsen
Connecticut Attorney General**

**David M. Louie
Hawaii Attorney General**

**Lisa Madigan
Illinois Attorney General**

**Doug Gansler
Maryland Attorney General**

**Martha M. Coakley
Massachusetts Attorney General**

**Catherine Cortez Masto
Nevada Attorney General**

**Ellen Rosenblum
Oregon Attorney General**

**Kathleen Kane
Pennsylvania Attorney General-Elect**