



Sheriff Mark Hunter

COLUMBIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

4917 US Hwy. 90 East • Lake City, Florida 32055-6288

www.columbiasheriff.org

November 2, 2015

I have received numerous requests about where I stand on the Open Carry Bill (HB 163/SB 300) currently submitted in the Florida Legislature. I strongly support the 2nd Amendment and believe in lawful ownership and possession of firearms; however, this bill's language causes me concern. I took an oath not only to support and defend the Constitution, but also to protect the citizens of Columbia County and the State of Florida.

The current bill does not clearly define how the firearm is to be carried or secured and it places unnecessary liability on law enforcement by limiting their ability to interact with a person who is openly carrying a firearm.

Under current Florida law, which I support, you may carry a gun openly or concealed on your property, in your place of business without a permit; you may also carry a gun concealed in your vehicle without a permit as long as it is securely encased; and you may carry a gun concealed on your person with a permit. Over 1 million Floridians have concealed weapons permits. Countless others lawfully carry guns without a permit in their car, at home, or within their business, which affords them protection for themselves and their families.

I continually show my support for responsible and lawful gun carry by signing requests for concealed weapons and Class 3 permits.

My highest priority is the safety of the citizens of Columbia County. I do not support the bill in its current form because I do not believe it will make us safer.

I will consider supporting HB 163/SB 300 only if the bill's current language is revised to address my concerns as mentioned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Hunter".

Mark A. Hunter
Sheriff
Columbia County, FL