

# On Target

Winter 2021



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Gun control advocates never rest. They may go quiet from time to time. But they are always out there waiting for any opportunity to infringe on Second Amendment rights and demonize gun owners.

This past November, the Michigan Secretary of State attempted to ban firearms at Michigan polling places. The reason given was voter intimidation despite no history of firearms related voter intimidation in Michigan. MCRGO and its allies defeated this scheme in court.

President Biden campaigned on a gun control platform to ban sales of modern rifles, require a mandatory confiscation or \$200 tax stamp for existing modern rifles and magazines holding more than 10 rounds, end online sales of firearms and ammunition, and put firearms manufactures out of business by removing liability protections.

That isn't enough for some members of Congress. Rep. Shiela Jackson Lee recently introduced legislation to create a national firearms registry -not just of firearms but of firearms owners. Under the bill, firearms owners would need to take 24 hours of training, complete a subjective mental health screening that requires interviews with family members, and pay \$800 to the government as insurance.

The newest encroachment is more localized: banning firearms in Michigan's Capitol Building, a building that hasn't seen a firearms discharge, intentional or negligent, in its 142 year history. This ploy seeks to take advantage of an environment of fear following last year's lockdown protests to push through more pointless gun control. When the Michigan Capitol Commission compromised on a ban of open carry last month, proponents cried foul saying that even licensed concealed carry needs to be prohibited.

History and recent events make it clear that their goal isn't compromise on "common sense" gun laws to reduce violent crime. Their intent is to eliminate the ability to own and carry firearms for self defense. They won't rest. We won't either. We owe it to future generations to keep liberty intact.

**Steve Dulan, MCRGO Second Vice-Chair**

# Executive Director's Message

The 101<sup>st</sup> Michigan legislative session began on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Like the previous legislative session, Michigan has a pro-gun majority legislature and an anti-gun governor. The likelihood of any substantial firearms legislation passing these next two years is minimal. However, this session serves as an idea incubator for self-defense advocates planning for a new governor in 2023 and their gun control antagonists hoping for a change in legislative direction as a result of redistricting.

MCRGO's member-elected Board of Directors votes on legislative positions after careful consideration and discussion. Two of the more innovative bills recently reintroduced and MCRGO's positions on them have attracted some interest from our members.

HB 4006 would provide a pistol free zone exemption (unrestricted concealed pistol license) for any elected official. This bill is yet another pistol free zone carve-out for special people. We all hate that. It's unfair. The initial reaction of most gun owners is to oppose it. After substantial discussion, MCRGO's Board voted to support this legislation at the 2020 annual members meeting. The bill creates huge openings in who can qualify for an unrestricted license. It's not just limited to state elected officials. It's open to anyone who holds elective office in this state. That's every township board member, every school board member, every road commissioner, and every precinct delegate. Those precinct delegate positions in particular are often not competitive and sometimes unfilled. This is an easy way for the average CPL holder to get an unrestricted license. It undermines the concept of pistol free zones. A secondary benefit is that it provides an incentive for concealed pistol license holders to run for state and local elected office. More pro-gun elected officials would be a great thing.

HB 4027 would make private property owners liable in a civil action for damages that result from injuries that an individual sustains on property that the owner has made a gun-free or weapon-free zone. The bill is inclusive of most private property including private residences, not just private businesses open to the public. This bill violates private property rights. It holds private property owners liable for crimes they did not commit. It goes against the principles most of us stand for, undermining the liberty we seek to defend, and inserting more government into what is now a simple contract between private parties.

You can view MCRGO's positions on all Michigan firearms legislation by going to [MCRGO.org](http://MCRGO.org) and clicking on Legislation in the top menu bar. At the March 2021 Board meeting, the Board will confirm or reconsider these positions on bills like HB 4006 and HB 4027 reintroduced from the 2019-2020 legislative session.

## **Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners (MCRGO)**

P.O. Box 14014; Lansing, MI 48901    (517) 484-2746    [www.mcrgo.org](http://www.mcrgo.org)

Mission: *"Promoting the safe use and ownership of firearms through education, litigation, and legislation."*

Nate DeWeerd, Chair & President  
Richard Martin, First Vice Chair  
Steve Dulan, Second Vice Chair  
Dawn Martin, Treasurer & Secretary  
Charles Perricone, Director  
Rep. Phil Green, Director

Sarah Taylor, Director  
Bill LaVoy, Director  
Susan Mc-Cray King, Director  
Steve Sanderson, Director  
Sen. Pete Lucido, Director

Brady Schickinger, Executive Director & Webmaster

# MCRGO 2020 Annual Meeting Summary

MCRGO's 2020 Annual Meeting was held on Friday, December 4 through a Zoom web conference as a result of state restrictions on indoor meetings due to COVID-19. The meeting was also broadcast at MCRGO Coffee Table on Facebook.

MCRGO had 18,705 current paid members as of 12/1/2020, an 80.8% increase from 12/1/2019. This is primarily the result of exceptionally high student certifications during the summer and fall months.

MCRGO life memberships increased by 49% in 2020 with 31% of new life members being new to the organization. MCRGO now has 630 life members.

MCRGO's annual Statement of Financial Activity was reviewed during the meeting and is available to current members by contacting the organization.

MCRGO instructors certified 12,871 students since 12/1/2019, 41.9% of the program's historical total of 30,729 since July 2016. MCRGO had 290 current instructors including 49 advanced instructors, and 26 instructor candidates as of 12/4/2020.

Nate DeWeerd was elected President and Chair. Rich Martin was elected First Vice Chair. Steve Dulan was elected Second Vice Chair. Dawn Martin was elected Secretary & Treasurer. Nate DeWeerd assumed Operations Committee Chair. Susan McCray-King was elected Education Committee Chair.

There are five Board seats to be elected in 2021, one for each geographic region. Applications will appear in the Spring 2021 On Target. The ballot will be in the Summer 2021 On Target with electronic ballots emailed to members with email addresses on file. The election will conclude in September.

After much discussion, the Board voted to support HB 6226 of 2020 (PFZ Exemption for Elected Officials).

The MCRGO Marketing Campaign will resume once Facebook/Instagram lifts its ban on political and social issue advertising.

The winter outdoor shows will continue as normal. Volunteers will be given membership credit if the shows are later cancelled due to COVID-19.

A Gifts, Sponsorships, Donations, and Advertising policy has been published on MCRGO Coffee Table for member comments to be followed by a Board vote at its March 2021 quarterly meeting.

Strong concerns were expressed about adding a suicide component to the MCRGO CPL class. Talks with the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will continue but MCRGO's Board would need to approve a course component prior to implementation.

The Board voted to affiliate MCRGO with Michigan United Conservation Clubs at \$250/year. MCRGO will not vote on MUCC resolutions outside of MCRGO's mission (e.g. deer baiting).

Sarah Taylor proposes development of a youth training program. Referred to Education Committee.

Ron Tiller proposes changes to student materials. Referred to Education Committee.

# Gun Groups Win Suit Against State

MCRGO, joined by allied Michigan gun groups, prevailed in an October lawsuit to block enforcement of a directive by the Michigan Secretary of State prohibiting open carry at Michigan polling places.

On Friday, October 16, 2020 just two weeks before the 2020 General Election, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson issued a directive to the state's clerks banning the open carry of firearms in polling places. The order was not promulgated per the Administrative Procedures Act and lacked statutory authority. Benson indicated the blanket ban on open carry was necessary to protect against voter intimidation despite the state already having existing laws prohibiting voter intimidation and brandishing of firearms. Benson was assisted in drafting the order by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel.

In the days that immediately followed, the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police as well as numerous county sheriffs and local law enforcement agencies stated they would not enforce the ban. Consequently, Nessel indicated the Michigan State Police would enforce it.

On Tuesday, October 27, 2020, the Michigan Court of Claims, after oral arguments, ruled in favor of the Plaintiffs, granting a preliminary injunction and enjoining enforcement of the directive. On Thursday, October 29, 2020, the Michigan Court of Appeals denied Defendants' leave to appeal. Defendants immediately appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court requesting a decision by 10 a.m. on Monday, November 2, 2020. The Michigan Supreme Court rejected the appeal through silence.

The courts determined the Michigan Secretary of State violated the law when she issued her pronouncement *ultra vires*. The Administrative Procedures Act requires that all proposed new rules must go through a specific process. This process was not followed. Furthermore, Benson violated the separation of powers in Michigan's Constitution. There are statutes in Michigan that make clear that the mere open carry of a firearm is not criminal and that lay out where Michigan residents may or may not carry.

The substance of the "order" defined the mere presence of a visible firearm as intimidating or threatening. Leaving that unchallenged would have begun a steep slide down a slippery slope for open carry anywhere. Even if you are one of the approximately 700,000 Michiganders who holds a CPL and you choose to carry concealed, you should be thankful that Michigan is an open-carry state, if only for the fact that you don't have to worry about facing criminal charges for an inadvertent exposure of your gun.

This order is part of a pattern of blaming and intimidating lawful gun owners and demonizing guns. We have years of experience showing clearly that so-called "gun free zones" are dangerous.

## Michigan Capitol Open Carry Ban

On January 11, 2021, following months of political pressure as a result of the Spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown protests, the Michigan State Capitol Commission banned the open carry of firearms in the Michigan Capitol Building. The ban exempts law enforcement as well as concealed pistol license holders. The wording of the ban does not appear to prevent licensed CPL holders from openly carrying firearms leading to some confusion.

The ban did not satisfy gun control advocates who seek to prohibit all carry, both open and concealed, from both the Michigan Capitol Building and on its grounds. MCRGO opposes any ban as an unnecessary infringement on self-defense rights. Gun free zones encourage, rather than deter, violent crime.

# What's Going on with the BATFE?

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATFE) is a federal law enforcement agency within the United States Department of Justice. It is overseen by the United States Attorney General, a member of the President's cabinet. The BATFE is empowered by Congress to regulate the sale, possession, and transportation of firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce. The agency has been controversial over much of its history including during Prohibition and its involvement in the more modern Ruby Ridge and Waco incidents.

Following the November presidential election, the BATFE's Acting Director Regina Lombardo began a process of arbitrarily redefining the definition of a firearm. The BATFE's recent focus has been on 80% lower receivers and pistol braces.

The BATFE has begun raiding companies producing 80% complete lower receivers which, until recently, it had defined as incomplete and unable to be regulated as firearms. Gun control advocates refer to the unfinished receivers as "ghost guns," a term also used for 3D printed firearms components.

Why the sudden change? On November 10, 2020 Lombardo admitted during a conference call that the BATFE had been in contact with the Biden transition team to discuss its top priorities. Those priorities for 2021, not surprisingly, include regulating 80% lower receivers and pistol braces.

The BATFE has, for years, wanted to go after pistol brace firearms as short-barreled rifles (SBRs). In early December 2020, the BATFE felt emboldened enough to publish a notice of intent to further regulate pistol braces. The agency backed down just prior to Christmas after gun owners submitted over 48,000 public comments in opposition including a letter from 90 members of Congress which noted that the BATFE's proposed regulatory shift could put millions of law-abiding Americans in serious legal jeopardy.

The BATFE's actions since Election Day are a foreboding of future battles that could be decided, not in the narrowly divided U.S. Congress, but by unelected federal bureaucrats who would only be accountable to the most anti-gun administration in American history. Will the executive branch attempt to bypass the legislative branch in its gun control efforts as some state governors have done with COVID-19 orders? We are about to find out.

## MCRGO Debuts Digital Membership Cards

For reasons of economy and practicality MCRGO's Board eliminated the routine printing and mailing of membership cards in early 2019. The cards were getting little use with most members either throwing them out or stuffing them in wallets forgotten. We are aware that some members either need the cards for CMP club affiliation benefits or want the cards for proof of membership. Consequently, at the suggestion of a member, the Board approved the creation of a digital membership card at its September meeting.

Your digital membership card can be found by going to the MCRGO.org page and clicking on Member Login on the main horizontal menu bar. After logging in, your digital membership card will be located to the bottom right of the page under the Ask an Attorney form. While the card is intended to be used digitally, there is an option to print it from your home printer. If you lack your member number to log in, you can find it with the online search.

# Why Join MCRGO?

- The great majority of firearms laws that affect you come from our state constitution and state laws rather than the federal government. This includes our right to carry outside our homes both openly and concealed.
- Created 24 years ago by concealed pistol advocates in the successful fight to implement “shall-issue” concealed carry in Michigan, MCRGO is Michigan's largest non-profit, state-based firearms organization.
- MCRGO is the the most influential advocate to the Michigan Legislature for protecting and expanding your rights as a gun owner. It is the only organization that includes current and former legislators on its member elected Board of Directors. While other organizations react to firearms legislation, MCRGO is driving the legislative agenda.
- MCRGO is the only firearms organization in Michigan with paid full time staff available throughout the week to answer your questions. Our executive director has 25 years of experience working on firearms related legislation. Our attorney and spokesman is a nationally recognized gun rights advocate.
- MCRGO works in active cooperation with the National Rifle Association on a broad range of firearms and shooting sports issues and assists allied groups including Students for Concealed Carry, gun clubs, sportsman's organizations, and state and local law enforcement.

**“Promoting the safe use and ownership of firearms through education, litigation and legislation.”**

-MCRGO Mission Statement

## What your membership dues include:

- The satisfaction of a good citizen in knowing that in addition to protecting your family, friends and neighbors by making the decision to carry concealed, you're also fighting to protect your and their constitutional rights to self defense. MCRGO membership puts you in the vanguard of Michigan concealed pistol license holders.
- Support of MCRGO's heavy involvement in the politics of maintaining and improving firearms rights. Politics is a game of numbers and every member is needed and appreciated.
- MCRGO's quarterly “On Target” newsletter providing detailed background on MCRGO's current work on efforts such as strengthening preemption laws, eliminating no carry zones, ending the practice of granting special firearms rights to special groups, and promoting firearms recreation including both hunting and sport shooting as well as exclusive feature stories and interviews with the people fighting for our rights as responsible gun owners.
- MCRGO's weekly Monday morning E'News answering questions submitted by fellow members.
- Access to MCRGO's members-only features at [www.mcrgo.org](http://www.mcrgo.org) including the popular “Ask the Lawyer” section.
- Support of MCRGO's public firearms advocacy efforts though traditional media including guest editorials in local Michigan newspapers, interviews on radio and television and participation in community forums and local government meetings as well as electronic media including MCRGO's website which provides CPL and firearms FAQs, instructor referrals and classified ads, Twitter updates, YouTube, and MCRGO's very active Facebook pages.

# Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Required only for Senior Life Membership)

## Membership Options (Circle Choice)

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Year</b>           | <b>\$30.00</b>                     |
| <b>2 Years</b>          | <b>\$55.00</b>                     |
| <b>3 Years</b>          | <b>\$80.00</b>                     |
| <b>Veterans</b>         | <b>\$20.00 per year, stackable</b> |
| <b>Life</b>             | <b>\$600.00</b>                    |
| <b>Veteran Life</b>     | <b>\$500.00</b>                    |
| <b>Sr. Life (62+)</b>   | <b>\$300.00</b>                    |
| <b>Veteran Sr. Life</b> | <b>\$250.00</b>                    |

**Checks can be made payable to:**

**MCRGO  
P.O. Box 2294  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501**

**A membership packet including a MCRGO decal and a membership card will be sent to all new and renewing members. Membership cards are sent out by MCRGO's printer on 8 week mailing cycles.**

## Membership FAQs:

- New members immediately gain full rights in the organization including the ability to run for the board of directors and access to the popular "Ask the Lawyer" benefit.
- Renewing former MCRGO members keep their previous member identification number. Former membership history remains intact.
- Membership will give you access to every copy of "On Target" ever published by MCRGO including issues you may have missed.
- If you're a MCRGO firearms instructor, your membership will allow you to list your contact information on the "Find an Instructor" portion of our website. This is the most frequently accessed list of pistol safety training instructors in the state for people seeking to obtain their conceal pistol license.
- Please call MCRGO's Executive Director Brady Schickinger at 517-484-2746 with questions or e-mail him at [brady@mcrgo.org](mailto:brady@mcrgo.org)

## Join On-line!

You can join on-line, saving yourself both time and postage. No proof of service is necessary for veteran memberships.

1. Go to [www.mcrgo.org](http://www.mcrgo.org).
2. In the main menu bar, select "Become a Member" or "Renew Membership".
3. Select your desired membership level.
4. Enter membership information.
5. Enter payment information.
6. Click confirm to process your membership.
7. A welcome e-mail will be sent to you with your membership number. Check you spam folder if it is not in your inbox. Welcome letters are mailed through USPS every six weeks.

# Outdoor Shows Cancelled for 2021

The Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners was scheduled to return to Outdoorama at Novi and the Ultimate Sport Show at Grand Rapids in 2021. Both shows were cancelled on Tuesday, February 2 just as this issue of On Target was going to press. MCRGO plans to return to both shows in 2022.

Outdoorama was cancelled due to state rules preventing most large indoor gatherings that are expected to be in place through at least the end of February. The Ultimate Sports Shows has been cancelled as DeVos Place has just become "The West Michigan Vaccine Center" for the next 3-6 months.

