



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
January 12, 2022
Assembly Bill 498

Representative Spiros and fellow members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety – thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on AB 498, relating to the minimum age to be eligible for a license to carry a concealed weapon.

Equality before the law is the bedrock of a free society and the American justice system. Current firearm laws in Wisconsin prevent many of our fellow citizens from enjoying the rights and privileges that should be afforded to all.

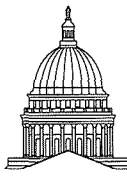
Under current federal law, individuals must be at least 21 in order to purchase a handgun from a Federal Firearms License (FFL) dealer. However, that was deemed unconstitutional by a federal appeals court on July 13, 2021, believing the law was an “arbitrary restriction that relegated 18-20 year-olds to a second-class status under the Second Amendment.”

Wisconsin allows individuals aged 18-20 to own and possess handguns. However, state law requires individuals to be at least 21 years of age to obtain a concealed-carry permit. As a result, those between 18-20 may legally own and possess a handgun, but are unable to obtain the same concealed-carry permit as other law-abiding adults, therefore, maintaining a lower status under the law.

AB 498 would lower the age required to obtain a concealed-carry permit from 21 to 18. Keeping the age at 21 is unnecessary, arbitrary, at-odds with our age of majority, and inconsistent with the principles outlined in the federal appeals case.

Individuals who are old enough to legally own and possess a handgun are also old enough to obtain a concealed-carry permit. It is our obligation as the state legislature to ensure equality before the law.

I want to thank the committee for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.



JULIAN BRADLEY
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

Assembly Bill 498

Chairman Spiros and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 498.

The case for concealed carrying a handgun is well known. Adults have a right to protect themselves, and that includes the concealed carrying of a handgun. The right of free adults to defend themselves is a right the founding fathers made very clear. Laws against self-defense only benefit criminals.

Every man and woman must take self-protection into their own hands, and the Legislature must ensure they have the power to do that.

Current law allows someone between the ages of 18 and 20 to own a handgun but does not allow adults to conceal the handgun they legally own. This bill codifies a simple principle: If you're an adult who can own a handgun, you can receive the proper license to carry that gun to defend yourself.

Thank you for taking the time to hold a hearing on this bill. Thank you also to Representative Sortwell for authoring this bill, and thank you to everyone who came out to testify in support of this important bill.