



Press Release

Media and State Confuse the Open Carry Issue

A simple concept becomes clouded and treacherous

Bridgeport Connecticut, January 18, 2016: A common refrain anytime the state or local police in Connecticut screw up and arrest, detain or harass law-abiding citizens is that 'the law is confusing'. There is no better example of this at play than in cases involving unconcealed (open) carry of handguns in Connecticut. Time and time again, we see police officers, paid and sworn to know and uphold the law, who have no idea what the law is. Or worse, they don't care what the law is and will make up their own laws in the absence of laws that they want on the books.

This week, a great example of that police ignorance and arrogance popped up in Bridgeport, Connecticut. A man standing in a Subway restaurant trying to order his meal was [stopped and detained](#) by the Bridgeport police department. The police officer, later joined by his equally ignorant, but more aggressive Sergeant, harass the man and coerce the employees at the restaurant to ask the patron to leave. The police did indicate that the man was not doing anything illegal, that the call for service did not originate from the restaurant that he was attempting to patronize, and then, that they let him leave the restaurant without arrest.

In other articles and press releases in our archives, we have previously [explained](#) that, in the past, many police departments, including Bridgeport, have seen nothing illegal in their actions, actions motivated by their ignorance of or disregard for the specific language of Connecticut laws. In the past, Torrington [confirmed](#) that our educational message about the precise language and correct interpretation of the laws has been received by them. Wethersfield has [confirmed](#) the same.

The Connecticut State Police have also [acknowledged](#) this, but then clouded the issue with a poorly worded '[Training Memo](#)'. This training memo goes on to say:

*If an individual purposefully refuses to produce such a permit, **or properly identify themselves**, then they may be subject to arrest for Interfering with an Officer, CGS 53a-167a, **if the elements of that crime are present.** – State Police Training Memo*

Some State's Attorneys have purportedly made comments to media organizations that a person's reluctance to automatically melt into subservient compliance and immediately whip out an ID

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somehow justifies an arrest, simply because a person, especially a law-abiding citizen, is not thrilled with the idea of being put on the spot or if the person refuses to show a permit while carrying openly. However, despite the wording of this memo, where it clearly dances around the issue and explains that you still have to have the other elements that constitute 'Interfering with and Officer', that memo was issued in 2013. Now, this is 2016.

Media has also played a role in obfuscating the "open carry" issue by stating that the laws were [somehow confusing](#), even though the prevailing Connecticut Laws are startlingly clear on this issue. Various misleading statements have also clouded the recent Bridgeport incident by [claiming](#) that there was a caller from the Subway restaurant. Another claim was that "open carry" is [somehow a new law](#), or interviewees were [citing](#) the state police memo, or local police, or quoting attorneys that have not read the law. All media should be more responsible by actually performing full research and then reporting only based on complete research.

In 2015, [PA 15-216](#) was passed to address these issues. [Before the Public Act](#), police implicitly needed [Reasonable Articulate Suspicion](#) of a crime to detain and demand identification from someone carrying unconcealed per [Terry v Ohio](#) and [Hiibel v. Nevada](#). After the Public Act, we now have state law that explicitly demands that police have Reasonable Articulate Suspicion of a crime to detain and demand identification from someone carrying unconcealed.

*Such holder shall present his or her permit upon the request of a **law enforcement officer who has reasonable suspicion of a crime** for purposes of verification of the validity of the permit or identification of the holder, provided such holder is carrying a pistol or revolver that is observed by such law enforcement officer. – [PA 15-216](#)*

[Another video](#), purportedly from the same day, shows another Bridgeport police officer apparently following the man into other stores and harassing him. When State or local police interpret what happened in Bridgeport as being a lawful use of police force it demonstrates that they are derelict in their duty. Any attempt to arrest, penalize or further harass someone in this kind of situation will be met with defense from the citizens of Connecticut.

The police behavior of harassing citizens who are carrying firearms legally, in the cited videos, is out of line for the Bridgeport Police Department, but sadly, not completely unpredictable. In fact, earlier the same month, that same police department settled with [Michael Rearden](#) to the tune of \$30k for putting Mr. Rearden in a cage for 6 hours when he was observed carrying lawfully in a vehicle. In Mr. Rearden's case, he showed his permit upon the first request. In the Subway Restaurant incident, the man refused to show his pistol permit since the police refused to establish their Reasonable Articulate Suspicion per [PA 15-216](#). This is [not the first time](#) that police in Connecticut have failed to correctly apply Connecticut Law in their duties as police officers when it comes to this issue, nor is it the first time that they have been accurately [informed of the law](#).

Connecticut Carry has been contacted by multiple police departments since the incident, as well as media outlets. Connecticut Carry has, and will continue to disperse proper information based on

laws, case law, court decisions, and real data, to the media, police departments, and state agencies, per our mission statement.

In fact, Connecticut Carry has offered free training and seminars to any police department that will agree to attend training on these, or other issues. After all, educating our police serves to help everyone in this state, and makes Connecticut a safer place for our citizens and for our police.

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*“The idea that we are still hearing about misinformed and malicious police and state agencies in Connecticut is an indictment against the entire anti-rights executive branch of Connecticut government that has a duty to train their employees. It cannot get any simpler or clearer: There is no law stipulating how you carry your handgun if you have a Pistol Permit. There is no lawful way for a police officer to demand your permit unless he has Reasonable Articulate Suspicion. Case closed.” – **Rich Burgess, President, Connecticut Carry***