

**Statement of the Missouri Catholic Conference  
In Opposition to SB 656 (Concealed Carry without a Permit)**

We, the Catholic Bishops of Missouri, urge the Missouri General Assembly to sustain Governor Nixon's veto of SB 656. Amending our current statutes to allow concealed carry without a permit is a move in the wrong direction, and we believe it would be detrimental to public safety and the common good.

Missouri's concealed carry law currently requires at least eight hours of formal training. This training must include instruction in the loading, cleaning, storing, and discharging of firearms, as well as instruction in when it is lawful and appropriate to use lethal force.

SB 656 decriminalizes the carrying of concealed weapons without a permit, thereby opening the door for Missouri citizens to lawfully conceal carry without undergoing any training, or taking the other steps necessary to obtain a permit. We feel compelled to oppose this change to Missouri's concealed carry statute.

We are not persuaded that this change will make us safer, or that it is in any way necessary. On the contrary, we think that doing away with the training requirement would undermine public safety and potentially put law enforcement at risk. This is especially true in light of the expansion of the "Castle Doctrine" in SB 656 which would allow a person in certain circumstances to use lethal force in "any location such person has a right to be."

Missouri's current statute outlines a reasonable and prudent process that ensures those obtaining a permit to carry a concealed weapon are properly trained and know when, and under what circumstances, they can lawfully use that weapon.

Catholic Church teaching recognizes the right to self-defense as a way of preserving one's life and in defense of others in the face of an imminent threat. We encourage Missouri citizens of good will, however, not to fall prey to the notion that we are somehow safer as individuals and as a society if everyone is always and everywhere armed.

We urge Missouri lawmakers to sustain Governor Nixon's veto of SB 656.

**CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MISSOURI**



Handwritten signature of Robert J. Carlson in black ink.

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson  
Executive Chairman  
Archbishop of St. Louis



Handwritten signature of James V. Johnston, Jr. in black ink.

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Vice Chairman  
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph



Handwritten signature of John R. Gaydos in black ink.

Most Reverend John R. Gaydos  
General Chairman  
Bishop of Jefferson City



Handwritten signature of Edward M. Rice in black ink.

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice  
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau