

## U.S. Supreme Court Limits State Restrictions on Firearms in Public-Facing Businesses

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### **Supreme Court Strikes Hawaii's "Express Consent" Gun-Carry Requirement**

In *Wolford v. Lopez* decided on June 25, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Hawaii may not require licensed concealed-carry permit holders to obtain express permission before entering private property that is open to the public while carrying a firearm. The Court concluded that the law violated the Second and Fourteenth Amendments.

The decision affects a wide range of customer-facing businesses, including restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, retail stores, barber shops, beauty salons, dry cleaners, and similar establishments that are generally open to the public.

### **Why This Matters to Business Owners**

The ruling does not require businesses to allow firearms on their premises. Property owners retain the right to determine whether firearms are permitted. What changes is the legal default rule.

Under Hawaii's former law, firearms were prohibited unless a business owner affirmatively authorized them. Following *Wolford*, the default is reversed: licensed carriers generally may enter businesses open to the public unless the owner clearly prohibits firearms.

### **Key Takeaways for Commercial Property Owners**

#### 1. Private Property Rights Remain Protected

Business owners continue to have the authority to restrict or prohibit firearms on their premises. The Court emphasized that private property owners retain control over access to their property.

#### 2. Signage Is More Important Than Ever

Businesses wishing to maintain a weapons-free environment should review:

- Entrance signage
- Customer-facing policies
- Employee procedures
- Tenant and lease requirements
- Security protocols

### 3. Policy Review Is Recommended

Companies should evaluate:

- Workplace violence prevention policies
- Incident response procedures
- Security and loss-prevention practices
- Employee training regarding armed patrons
- Insurance and risk-management considerations

#### **Strategic Considerations**

When determining whether to permit or prohibit firearms, business owners should consider:

- Customer expectations and safety concerns
- Employee comfort and workplace culture
- Security and enforcement costs
- Brand and reputational impact
- State and local legal compliance requirements

#### **Bottom Line**

*Wolford v. Lopez* strengthens constitutional protections for licensed firearm carriers while preserving the right of private businesses to establish their own firearms policies. Businesses that prefer a gun-free environment should ensure that their policies are clearly communicated, prominently displayed, and consistently enforced.

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