

Editorial: Gun control about to get harder

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Even if you accept the notion that the Second Amendment confers an individual right to bear arms – a proposition we wish the Supreme Court had rejected – states should be able to place reasonable restrictions on that right in the interests of public safety. One such restriction is California's requirement that permits to carry a concealed weapon be issued only for "good cause." Last week, a federal appeals court needlessly weakened that provision.

By a 2-1 vote, a panel of judges of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of five residents of San Diego County who had challenged the county's interpretation of the good cause requirement, which denies permits to applicants who can't cite some specific threat to their safety.

In his dissent last week, 9th Circuit Judge Sidney Thomas rightly argued that his colleagues should have confined their inquiry to the questions of whether the Second Amendment protected the concealed carrying of handguns in public and whether San Diego's rules infringed on that right. That approach would have yielded a different result.

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