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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard, Police Officials Denounce Radical Concealed Carry Proposal

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 18, 2009) Attorney General Terry Goddard, joined by 10 leading law enforcement officials, today voiced strong opposition to a proposal that would significantly loosen Arizona's gun laws by allowing gun owners to carry a concealed weapon without obtaining a permit.

Arizona currently requires gun owners to take an eight-hour course in gun laws and gun safety and pass a shooting test to receive a concealed carry permit. All but a few states have similar laws. Senate Bill 1270 would drop the permit requirement and allow all gun owners 18 years old or over to carry concealed weapons.

"This bill would make a radical and a dangerous change in state law," Goddard said. "Arizona's current law has worked well since being adopted in 1994. The permit process requires training and education that promote safety. Allowing all gun owners to carry concealed would create greater risks for law enforcement officers and community safety."

A Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the bill is scheduled Friday, and a vote is expected to follow.

Only two states, Alaska and Vermont, allow gun owners to carry concealed without a permit. They are among the smallest states in the nation with populations roughly one-tenth the size of Arizona's.

Goddard, who was joined by 10 police chiefs, sheriffs and other officers at a press conference at the State Capitol, noted that the bill is opposed by law enforcement organizations across Arizona.

"If this bill became law, our officers would have to treat every person they come in contact with as if they're armed. That would create large and unnecessary risks," said Jack Harris, public safety manager for the City of Phoenix.

For more information, please contact Anne Hilby at (602) 725-2200.

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