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Federal appeals court rules Americans have no right to concealed carry in public

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Americans have no constitutional right to carry concealed firearms outside the home, a federal appellate court ruled Thursday in a decision that immediately came under sharp criticism from Second Amendment advocates.

In a closely watched en banc ruling, the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a California law that requires a gun owner to show “good cause” in order to obtain a permit to carry a concealed handgun in public. What constitutes good cause is left up to county sheriffs, and the 7-4 decision overturns a ruling by a three-judge panel that said the requirements adopted by sheriffs in San Diego and Yolo counties were unconstitutional.

“We hold that the Second Amendment does not preserve or protect a right of a member of the general public to carry concealed firearms in public,” Judge William A. Fletcher wrote in a 52-page opinion for the majority.

The plaintiffs immediately announced plans to appeal to the Supreme Court, but the death of Justice Antonin Scalia has raised questions of how the eight-judge high court will deal with hot-button gun cases.

The California Rifle & Pistol Association said the 9th Circuit decision was out of touch with mainstream America.

“This decision will leave good people defenseless, as it completely ignores the fact that law-abiding Californians who reside in counties with hostile sheriffs will now have no means to carry a firearm outside the home for personal protection,” the group said in a statement.