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## **N.J. gun rights groups want no part of any possible armed protest at the Statehouse**

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New Jersey is preparing for the possibility of an “armed march” Sunday at the Statehouse in Trenton.

But state law says almost anyone who shows up armed in public could face years in prison, and Second Amendment proponents are urging gun owners to stay away.

“The penalties are draconian,” said Evan Nappen, a prominent gun-rights attorney in Eatontown. “Every Second Amendment organization that I know of in New Jersey, every legitimate one, is opposed to any type of armed rally.”

The concern follows last week’s deadly riot in the U.S. Capitol.

Officials have asked residents to report any suspicious activity amid reports of more protests nationwide, although there’s “no known specific or credible threat to our state’s capital,” Jared Maples, director of New Jersey’s Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, said Wednesday.

A State Police spokesman said only one group was recently granted a permit to protest at the Statehouse — and that was NJ Parents for In-Person Learning, which got the green light to rally this past Wednesday.

No organization has been granted a permit for the coming days through Jan. 20, the day of the presidential inauguration, according to Sgt. Lawrence Peele.

With or without a permit, you generally can’t walk around holding a gun in the Garden State.

You can apply for a concealed carry permit, but that can take years and a local police union recently argued in a lawsuit that the process even blocked many retired cops from carrying.

Residents may travel with guns, but generally only if they’re locked up and unloaded, and only if they’re going to certain places, like a shooting range.

Some weapons are banned entirely, including semi-automatic rifles with certain features.

Nappen has represented many people threatened with hard time — from three to five to ten year sentences — because of firearms offenses.

“A warning to all law-abiding gun owners: Under no circumstances attend or support this absurd rally,” Nappen added.

*NJ Advance Media staff writer Brent Johnson contributed to this report.*