



**State Representative Bill Patmon
Sponsor Testimony
House Bill 153
April 25, 2017**

Good afternoon Madam Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee.

Imitation firearms that resemble real firearms are becoming a nuisance to public safety. As a rule, when toys pose safety hazards, we pull them off of the shelves. In the case of imitation firearms, the opposite has taken place—we continue to make them more and more life-like. This increases the chances that they will be mistaken for the real thing. Taking advantage of the resemblance, three boys attempted to rob a man and chased cars with an imitation firearm in Cleveland. On the flip side, a man Cincinnati painted his firearm bright red to make the police think that it was a toy. Police often have to make split second decisions regarding the validity of a firearm when they are thrust into a situation. When all that differentiates a firearm from an imitation one is a coat of paint or some stickers, let's take the guess work out of it. A toy should look like a toy.

In 1990, the Bureau of Justice Statistics produced a paper entitled "Toy Guns: Involvement in Crime & Encounters With Police."ⁱ The paper found that U.S. police reported that they had used or threatened to use force "in a confrontation where an imitation gun had been mistaken for a real firearm" at a rate of about 200 incidents per year. Two years earlier, the U.S. Senate passed an amendment, co-sponsored by Senator Bob Dole, which required all toy or other imitation firearms to have an orange plug permanently fixed in the gun barrelⁱⁱ. This bill does not affect motion picture, television, or stage productions; certified or regulated sporting events or competitions; or military or civil defense activities or ceremonial activities.

Again Madam Chair Roegner and members of the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee, I thank you for your time and am more than happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this legislation.

ⁱ <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4174>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/26/us/senate-approves-a-ban-on-plastic-firearms.html>