

Chair Roegner and members of the House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations,

My name is Brad J. Bushman. I would like to submit this written testimony against House Bill 201, which expands the right to concealed carry.

I received my Ph.D. in 1989 from the University of Missouri. I am a professor of communication and psychology at The Ohio State University, where I hold the Rinehart Chair of Mass Communication. Previously, I was a professor at Iowa State University (1990-2003) and at the University of Michigan (2003-2010).

For over 30 years I have studied the causes, consequences, and solutions to the problem of human aggression and violence. Following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, I co-chaired an advisory committee to the National Science Foundation on youth violence. Our committee published a report on youth violence that was distributed to each member of Congress and to each state Governor, and I testified before Congress on the contents of this report.

I also served as a member of President Obama's committee on gun violence. I have published nearly 200 peer-reviewed journal articles, which have been cited nearly 30,000 times (ranked #2 among communication scholars). My research has been repeatedly funded by federal grants (e.g., National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health), has been published in the top scientific journals (e.g., *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*), and has been featured extensively in the mass media (e.g., BBC, *New York Times*, National Public Radio, *Wall Street Journal*, Fox News, CBS Evening News, ABC 20/20, Discovery Channel).

I am providing the link to a piece I wrote for *Psychology Today* on the "Tradeoffs of gun ownership."^[1] Although people believe that guns make them safer, they are wrong. If you own a gun it is much more likely to be used to kill you or someone you know or love than to kill a stranger in self-defense. For every gun used to kill a stranger, there are 34 homicides, 78 suicides, and 2 accidental gun deaths.^[2]

The go-to source for state gun laws is the [Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#). I personally correlated state gun laws with the number of gun-related deaths in each state (i.e., suicides, homicides, fatal accidents). The correlation was $r = -.715$. Note that the correlation is negative — the stronger the gun laws, the fewer the number of gun-related deaths.

In comparison, the correlation between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer is $r = .40$. Note that the correlation is positive — the more cigarettes you smoke, the more likely you are to get lung cancer.

If you square a correlation, it gives the percentage of variance explained by that variable. Thus, of all the variables that might explain gun-related deaths (e.g., alcohol consumption, age, poverty), gun laws explain over 51% ($-.715 \times -.715 = .511$). In

comparison, of all the variables that explain lung cancer (e.g., diet, exercise, age, poverty), cigarettes explain 16% (i.e., $.4 \times .4 = .16$).

Thus, the link between gun laws and gun deaths is over three times stronger than the link between cigarettes and lung cancer.

We pass strong laws to regulate the consumption of tobacco (e.g., warning labels on cigarette packs, banning cigarette advertisements on television). We should likewise pass strong laws to reduce gun violence.

What we need to do in the State of Ohio is to make stronger gun laws, not weaker gun laws, such as HB 201. This law will make Ohioans much less safe, not safer.

On this issue, opinions do not matter. We have scientific data. These data clearly show that restrictive gun laws are negatively related to gun-related deaths, and that relationship is much stronger than the relationship between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer (51% versus 16%). Please do not pass HB 201.