

Ohioans

For Safe Communities

Through Gun Violence Prevention

Chair Roegner,
Ranking Member Lipps,
Members of Ohio House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations,

Ohioans for Safe Communities urges the Committee to vote against HB 201. This bill would remove essential ingredients of Ohio's current CCW permit procedure that currently protect Ohio citizens from concealed carry by persons who are unqualified to handle a concealed weapon. In particular, the removal of all training requirements and background checks in order to legally carry a concealed firearm is an invitation to casual and careless carrying of lethal weapons.

A 2017 study published in the *National Bureau of Economic Research* found that in states with right-to-carry laws "violent crime is estimated to be 13-15% percent higher than it would have been without the RTC law."ⁱ Other research shows that states with lax gun laws are experiencing higher rates of firearms deaths than states with greater regulation. A 2017 study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* concluded, "We found evidence that stronger firearm laws are associated with reductions in firearm homicide rates. The strongest evidence is for laws that strengthen background checks and that require a permit to purchase a firearm."ⁱⁱ

This bill appears in the Ohio Legislature at a time when, after many years of gun rights expansion Ohio experienced its worst gun violence toll since the passage of concealed carry in 2004. The latest figures (2015) show a gun violence death toll of 1,397, whereas in 2004 the death toll was 1,036. That's an increase of 35% since 2004 (population grew approximately 2% in that period). Ohio's gun violence death rate is now above the national average (11.9 per 100,000 Ohio compared to 11.1 US).ⁱⁱⁱ Ohio's experiment with lax gun laws is a failure.

It's time to reject the false promises of the gun lobby that more guns in more hands make Ohioans safer. Making it easier for untrained, unqualified, and potentially prohibited persons to carry concealed weapons is an invitation to more gun violence. More guns in less qualified hands would make inappropriate or illegal use more likely while increasing the likelihood of accidents and careless handling that leads to gun thefts. Accordingly we urge the defeat of HB 201.

ⁱ "States with Right to Carry Concealed Handgun Laws Experience Increases in Violent Crime, According to Stanford Scholar," *Stanford News*, June 21, 2017, <http://news.stanford.edu/2017/06/21/violent-crime-increases-right-carry-states/>

ⁱⁱ "Firearm Laws and Firearm Homicides: A Systematic Review," *JAMA*, Jan. 2017 <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2582989>

ⁱⁱⁱ Note that Ohio gun deaths increased by 15% from 2014-2015, while US gun deaths increased by 8%. See CDC data at http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/ohio_and_for_2014-15 data see <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/ohio/ohio.htm>