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HOUSE FEDERALISM & INTERSTATE RELATIONS COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY ON HB 228
FEBRUARY 9, 2018

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Federalism & Interstate Relations Committee, please accept this as my written testimony in support of House Sub. H. B. No. 228. I appreciate the opportunity.

ORC 9.68 originally intended to ensure that all Ohioans can confidently know the firearms laws throughout the entire state. If law-abiding resident of Ohio understands the rules in Cincinnati then drives across the state to Cleveland, then they should have confidence knowing that they are not violating any laws as they travel.

Unfortunately, there are still municipalities that still implement more restrictive firearms-related laws than what the state currently allows, even in violation of ORC 9.68. The only recourse we have to hold these municipalities in compliance with state law is to take them to court. Several times, municipalities have waited until they have been sued and again waited until the court was about to rule. In the last days before the court decisions, they then update their municipal ordinances to be compliant. Even though the desired end results were achieved, that process has been tedious and very expensive with no incentive to prevent the municipalities like Cleveland from repeating the process. House Sub. H. B. No. 228 helps correct this problem by forcing these political subdivisions to pay for the expenses in these situations. In other words, it gives “teeth” to ORC 9.68 which should encourage municipalities to avoid the situation completely and stay in compliance with state law.

There are other positive changes in House Sub. H. B. No. 228 which I fully and enthusiastically support. These changes are all positive measures to help Ohioans be able to lawfully protect themselves.

I am confident that opponents to House Sub. H. B. No. 228 will employ emotional and passionate pleas that are appeals based on what “could” happen. As a firearms instructor, I speak to my students about the realities of armed confrontations and the practical lawful use of force in those situations. Trying to unravel the tangled web of legal issues with self-defense is the most challenging part of my classes. Most of my students are surprised to learn about the details of some of the laws regarding the burden of proof with self-defense. I regularly see Ohioans in my classes that are eager to learn, eager to be safe, and eager to be able to lawfully protect themselves. House Sub. H. B. No. 228 goes a long way to help them avoid accidentally and unknowingly becoming criminals if they do have to defend themselves and helps to avoid unjust prosecutions.

Again, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Federalism & Interstate Relations Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important matter.