

Molly Farrell  
May 15, 2018  
HB228 Testimony

My name is Molly Farrell, and I was born here in Ohio less than a mile from where I currently live in Columbus. Since that time, I lost count of how many people in my community have died because of guns. As a teenager, I knew of two people who were murdered with guns, one abducted from his college town in Steubenville and another abducted from our college town in Gambier; a neighbor and family friend murdered his wife and himself with a gun in front of their children; a cousin of mine did the same; and two loved ones of people closely connected to me killed themselves with guns, one of whom left behind a fresh Wal-Mart store receipt and gun-owner instruction manual spattered with her blood. I am here today because this is an atrocity, that I live in a community where deaths by guns are as routine as any other cause of death. You all know that no other country anywhere near our level of infrastructure and wealth has to put up with the rates of gun deaths that you, our elected leaders, ask us to put up with. You all know that states with common sense gun laws experience fewer gun deaths. You all know this, and yet you consider bills like HB228 anyway. The last time I testified at the statehouse I actually had to ask my elected representatives not to change the law to make it easier for guns to be carried into my daughter's daycare center. Her *daycare center*. My toddler can pull the glasses off my face despite my best efforts, and yet I listened to representatives from the NRA testify that we should make it easier for her to get her hands on an adult's gun. If I sound frustrated, I am. If I sound angry that I have to come down here again when I am tired and my body aches because I am halfway

through another pregnancy, I am. I am a mother who is angry that the safety of my children continues to be chipped away every day with proposed gun laws that even the police and the highway patrol oppose. My two year old already has to practice mass-shooter drills at her daycare, when friends of mine with preschoolers in Canada, England, Norway, and Germany have never even heard of such an appalling phenomenon. This is wrong. My job as a parent is to teach my children right from wrong, and I am not going to get up here and tell you, my elected representatives, that this bill is wrong, because that would be a waste of breath. You all know it is. You know the facts. You know that these types of bills lead to increased homicide rates. You know that a majority of gun owners support the existing laws. You know that strong, sensible gun permit laws reduce crime. You know that “stand your ground” style laws disproportionately affect communities of color. I refuse to participate in the fiction that you don’t know this already and need me to teach you. You also know that these laws are designed to get more guns into more hands, pure and simple, so we can see more blood-spattered store receipts. Like I said, right now I am the mother of a toddler and I’m pregnant so I’m tired, and I am also tired of hearing fictional stories about why we supposedly need laws like this. Stories like, a good guy with a gun will stop a bad guy with a gun. These are fictions, no more real than the Mother Goose stories I read to my daughter. I don’t have to teach you fiction from reality today. We have plenty of facts to do that. Instead, I will end with a real story. In my nice, predominantly white neighborhood of Clintonville, I grew up playing with my friend’s BB gun. We did things we were absolutely not supposed to do, things that were wrong, like shoot at strangers’ cars with the gun. And nothing

happened, to us or to anyone else. We definitely should have gotten in trouble and had that BB gun taken away, but I'm glad I'm alive today to tell you the story. And that may be because we were white. Walk for a few minutes in another direction, and children just like us who are black are going to be even more likely be murdered with impunity thanks to laws like these. And probably for doing a lot less than playing with a BB gun, potentially even just for existing. Children need safety to grow up. They need that safety so they can learn right from wrong; they need that safety so they can learn fact from fiction; and they need that safety so that when they hear that someone died from gun violence, they can be shocked, saddened, appalled, and outraged, not numbed. Rejecting HB228 is a step in that direction. Thank you.