



House Bill 585 Testimony
Shannon Gallagher - Proponent
Sandy Hook Promise in Ohio

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and all members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Shannon Gallagher. I am a mother of four, a former middle school teacher, a gun owner, a supporter of Sandy Hook Promise, and a committed advocate for violence prevention. I became an advocate for common sense gun reform a couple years ago as the instances of gun violence in schools rose in our state and around the country. As a mom and an educator, I knew it was my responsibility to become proactive in supporting violence prevention programs in schools and communities as well as supporting legislation that addresses the growing concerns of violence in our schools.

I am here today to give my support for House Bill 585. I am certain that the enactment of this common sense piece of legislation will help prevent violence in Ohio.

I want to tell you a little about Sandy Hook Promise for those that might not be familiar with our work. Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook School on December 14, 2012. SHP was created with the mission of preventing other such incidents of violence. Our focus is education and prevention. We have created educational programs that have been implemented throughout the nation.

In Ohio alone, SHP has trained and empowered over 525 volunteer "Promise Leaders" led by over 20 regional Captains. These dedicate individuals raise awareness, educate and implement SHP programs in their own communities to help prevent gun violence and keep their families and neighbors safe.

With our in-state staff and locally trained Promise Presenters, Sandy Hook Promise has:

- Delivered over 950 in-school *Know the Signs* programs in nearly all of Ohio's 88 counties. In 2017, SHP has trained 440 Ohio schools & 43 youth-serving organizations.
- Trained, protected, and empowered over 600,000 youth and adults to prevent violence before it takes place. So far in 2017, nearly 150,000 youth and adults have been trained.
- Stopped four planned school shootings and prevented additional gun or violence threats in schools located in every region of Ohio.

While we are certainly proud of the prevention and education work we have done, education alone is not going to solve the problem completely. Sandy Hook Promise is very much in support of the creation and implementation of extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) also referred to as red flag legislation, to empower family members and law enforcement agencies to prevent gun suicides and other gun violence tragedies before they happen.

Under such a law, family members and law enforcement officials can petition a court to temporarily separate at-risk individuals from firearms and other weapons. If the judge finds the person poses a significant danger of injury to self or others, the judge will order that the firearms be temporarily placed in safe storage until the person receives the help they need.

In the aftermath of a shooting incident, we often hear stories from friends or family members about the warning signs the shooter exhibited. Of the people who die by suicide, 70% tell someone of their plans or gave a warning, and 80% of school shooters told someone of their violence plans prior to the event. Family members are often in the best position to see the warning signs of violence and suicide first and extreme risk protection orders are a proven and critical tool that have been shown to save lives by providing families an opportunity to intervene when a loved one is in crisis and stop a tragedy before it happens.

It is my understanding the package of reforms included in House Bill 585, including the ERPO provisions, were recommended by a diverse group of Ohio leaders. This proposal is common sense and not about taking guns away from law abiding citizens. We owe it to our children and all Ohioans to do everything in our power to prevent additional tragedies like the one at Sandy Hook School, in Parkland, and other place throughout the country. The time to act it now, and I hope you will see the urgency in passing this bill.

Madame Chair, members of the committee, I thank you for your consideration and again urge passage of House Bill 585. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.