

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE 585 COMMITTEE**  
**MAY 24, 2018**  
**SUBMITTED BY**  
**JOHN VOGEL, TREASURER**  
**WESTERN RESERVE FISH & GAME ASSOCIATION**

I have several short statements from Jr. Civilian Marksmanship Program participants, parents and coaches from two different teams that use our facility. CMP is an important project that Western Reserve Fish & Game embraces. It allows us to educate youngsters in the lawful and traditional heritage of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment freedoms. We have the privilege of mentoring the next generation of responsible recreational firearms users in Ohio. Listen to what these young citizens have to say. You will find that their views are as valuable as the words of the youth proponents and their parents of this bill.

Coach Ace Stevens with the Niles Eagles team wants to voice his strongest objections to those parts of the bill that invade his privacy, limit his ability to buy firearms and supplies and restricts the guarantees to due process. Ace is a 24 year leader in CMP and a 20 year head coach. He serves as an official at national competitions at Camp Perry. His teams have produced several scholarship candidates and one candidate for the Olympics. He is a Vietnam combat vet and he stated that he feels as if he is being betrayed by politicians who are trying to take away constitutional rights that he took an oath to defend. In fact, he pointed out, his family has sacrificed a lot in defense of our freedoms, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, when his brother was severely wounded and he is currently coaching his team for this year's regional and national tournaments. His closing comment to me was "tell those people that I preach safety and responsibility." Under this organized sport, potential life long firearms enthusiasts are mentored about lawful and safe exercise of their freedom to own and use guns properly.

A team member of Ace's program, a 13 year old young lady, wanted to make sure that I tell the committee members that she just started competitive shooting and she finds it rewarding, educational and fun. She has built her self confidence and she feels safe at all times during her activities with CMP.

A 15 year old young man with the team is also in his first year. His sentiments mirror the young lady's. He wanted to make sure that we all understand that CMP is about safety, safety, safety.

Coach Mark Japuncha, from the Howland Rifles, submitted his own written testimony. It is important to note that he is a Trumbull County Sheriff's Deputy and a retired Air Force vet. Howland's team is unique. We believe that it was the last school varsity level shooting team in NE Ohio. They were forced out of the school range they had due to concerns of confined lead contamination and insurance. There has been an underlying agenda that fear over safety for the school and team is also in play. Coach Stevens and Coach Japuncha want to make it as clear as they can that they have no knowledge of any injuries to team members or spectators at any indoor or outdoor event in the past living memory of the sport in our district.

In my research for this presentation, I was reminded that our team is the only local program that readily accepts participants with moderate physical and mental situations and we make it work. I want the members of this committee to think about that and the ramifications of the Red Flag provisions of this bill. You could be cutting kids off from crucial experiences in life skills unintentionally.

I also spoke with Jim Futey, a four year NRA instructor and a three year member of our CHL/CCW program. He has participated in over 30 CHL sessions that have resulted in over 600 successfully trained

candidates for their Concealed Handgun License in Ohio. Jim is a retired educator with over 30 years of administrative and classroom experience. Jim told me that he is strongly opposed to the Red Flag provisions and that he feels that Red Flag is an end around play on our constitutional right to due process. He worries about the arbitrary interpretations that 585 allows regarding the legality of ammunition and firearms modifications.

And, now my own feelings about 585. Who'd have thought that a Republican would introduce an anti gun bill. Who'd have thought that a Republican legislature would allow 585 to advance to the point where it looks like it might actually get passed, especially with what appears to be no clear contemporary sponsorship. Who'd have thought.

I wonder, is 585 an honest knee jerk reaction to the epidemic of school violence. Is it a hastily drafted papering over of a severe failure to address the major issues of bullying, secondary school violence, family disconnect and underfunded educational resources. Or, being from the Mahoning Valley, do I wonder if politicians have developed a bill that opens up opportunities for enhanced revenue collection without levies for communities when local gun registration and special permits for gun shows come in under a blending of legislation with the Senate's version. I wonder if anyone has considered the ramifications of the gross invasion of privacy that the data collection stipulations of registration will create under our state's Open Records Act.

I'm counting on the message of the foreboding aspects of 585 on our Constitutional and federally mandated statutory rights by other presenters today. But, I'm concerned if the committee and the author learned the difference between a constitutionally guaranteed right and a privilege. Other than the obvious debate point that a right is a right and a privilege is an earned facet of law. Rights should never be used as an institutionalized system for collecting fees. Think Voter Poll Taxes and the influence the Civil Rights Movement had to gain through years of social unrest. State and local registration will have a price tag. Is it reasonable to figure that lawful firearms owners who comply with whatever registration gets implemented will be forced to foot the bill. When one thinks about it, a gun registration tax or fee has a lot of similarity to a poll tax.

What about the practicality of 585. What does it do to make citizens safer from the potential harm caused by evil or demented individuals. As hard as I try, I don't see it. Bad guys aren't going to run down to the police station to register their guns. Sick people aren't going to self volunteer for Red Flag recognition. 585 will most greatly impact law abiding residents of the state of Ohio and, considering the tight finances of today's government funds, how do you go from used copy paper to workable law. Is there any evidence that empirically states 585 will work any more effectively than the arsenal of laws already on the books.

One final thought. My Dad was a skilled tradesman for Westinghouse in East Pittsburgh. He actually worked on the atomic bomb during WWII. His tried and true wisdom that he always dragged out when we kids were faced with a life's challenge was this:

Anybody can fix something, if they can run to Sears and buy some gadget any time it suits them. But it takes a real craftsman to use the tools in the box. Ohio is already an apex example of meaningful gun safety laws. People need to learn effective use of the tools in the box instead of junking up the workshop with shiney new ineffective trinkets.