

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Minority Member Schiavoni and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

My name is Linda Elder, and I am a wife, mother, grandmother and registered nurse. I am also a coordinator for Ohioans for Concealed Carry. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 142.

I have had my concealed handgun license since 2004. Since then, I have heard that we must notify officers that we are armed for their safety. However, no one can give any evidence that officers are safer because we notify that we have a firearm on our person.

On the contrary, there are occasions where the act of notification has put citizens who carry firearms in danger. My husband and I were driving home from church one evening when he was pulled over because the license plate light was not functioning. My firearm was locked in my purse so we notified as the law requires. I told him that the purse was locked in my purse and the firearm was not easily accessible. The officer became very nervous, came to the passenger side of the car where I was seated and demanded to take my purse with the firearm inside to his car to write out his report. I told him that he was not entitled to take my purse; he was only permitted to take my firearm for the stop. He ordered me out of the van to the side of a busy two-lane road, then told me to give him the key to my purse. In his nervousness, he could not operate the key. I told him to give me the key before he broke it. After I unlocked the compartment of the purse, I tried to tell him that there is a safety device on the firearm and that he should not disengage it; however, he did not listen. He grabbed the firearm quickly and went to his car. The entire time he was gone, I was worried that he would harm himself or someone in our van because he was handling an unfamiliar firearm without proper orientation. Ordering me to the side of a busy road and handling a firearm in the presence of my children made me feel unsafe.

The requirement should be removed. The original language in HB 142 eliminates this requirement that puts citizens in danger; however, the compromise language of HB 142 does not. In my experience, the act of notifying escalated a simple traffic stop into a risky situation for my family and me. Please support the original language of HB 142 to remove the notification requirement so that families are not placed at risk.