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**Committees:**  
Agriculture & Natural Resources, Vice Chair  
General Government & Agency Review  
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Ways & Means  
**Special Appointments:**  
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Tax Expenditure Review Committee  
Dental Loan Advisory Board

**House Civil Justice Committee**  
**Senate Bill 175 — Sponsor Testimony**  
**Tuesday May 19, 2020**

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 175.

This bill fixes a loophole to help protect non-profit organizations around the state.

Current law today provides civil immunity from liability to three types of institutions if they are ever involved in a defensive shooting. This bill simply extends that protection to a fourth type of institution--nonprofit organizations--for instances where a concealed handgun licensee is involved in a defensive shooting on the organization's premises.

Over the last few years, we have unfortunately seen instances where domestic terror has wreaked havoc in nonprofit organizations, and in particular, houses of worship:

- Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, Wisconsin,
- Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina,
- Burnette Chapel in Antioch, Tennessee,
- Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and
- First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

All of these tragedies remind us that faith institutions and those they serve are at risk of being targets of violence.

The concept for this legislation was brought to my attention by a constituent who wants to close the loophole in current law for his church. His church, like many, has members who carry concealed as a part of their highly-structured defensive protection plan. These members have fulfilled the State of Ohio's concealed carry license requirements and have received firearms training from a retired State Highway Patrol Sergeant.

I want to be very clear that Senate Bill 175 **does not** expand concealed carry rights or locations. This is not a “gun bill.” But it will go a long way to protect the innocent organizations and their members, volunteers and officers who have no ill intent and are trying to do the right thing.

My hope is that this section of code will never be used, and that no religious institution or any nonprofit organization will be forced into defending themselves against an act of domestic terror.

However, if they are forced into taking such action, it is only right to extend the immunity to the institution offered under Senate Bill 175.

With support from 25 co-sponsors, this bill unanimously passed the Ohio Senate. It is my hope it will soon do the same here in the Ohio House.

Thank you again, Chairman Hambley and members of the committee, for the opportunity to present this issue to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.