

## Proponent Testimony for H.B. 178

Thank you Chair Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and Criminal Justice Committee Members, for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today concerning H.B. 178, which serves to modify current weapons law to permit concealed carry without a license.

My name is Judi Phelps. I am an unarmed and armed self-defense instructor at On Guard Defense Training Center & Shooting Range in the Hocking Hills. I have previously provided testimony on this bill, as well as attended opposition testimony so that I could better understand their concerns which appear to be two-fold. According to them, this bill is racist; and, will serve to increase violence, specifically in the African-American community. The problem with this argument is, much like government-mandated mask-wearing, they are not backed up by facts.

Let the record reflect that these are all blatant lies -- nothing more than “talking points” and fear-mongering designed to induce panic when the reality is that it is an attempt to further violate the rights of law-abiding Ohioans of every color.

The fact of the matter is that the existing concealed carry laws are racist and discriminatory. Some folks can't afford to purchase the required training or otherwise would be forced to take unpaid time off work in order to attend that training.

Some folks can't afford the application and license fees required to apply for the concealed handgun license.

Other folks live in federally-subsidized housing (i.e., HUD) which our current laws prohibit firearms on those premises. As is plain to see, our concealed carry laws very much discriminate against economically disadvantaged Ohioans of all colors.

According to *The Ohio Poverty Report* published February 2019, “while minorities usually have higher poverty rates than the majority, most poor people in Ohio are non-Hispanic whites.” This supports the fact that rural areas make up the majority of our state, specifically Appalachia, a region that is known to be predominantly poor white families with little to no access to Internet connectivity, quality education, jobs, healthcare and beyond. Likewise, poor folks in urban areas are typically blacks and other minorities, many of whom also struggle to access important services.

The report further states that approximately 60.7% of Ohio's poor are white while approximately 39.3% are minorities consisting of blacks, Hispanics, bi- and multi-racial persons and otherwise. Of that minority group, blacks represent the largest segment at approximately 25%.

Why would Ohio have laws that discriminate against Ohio's poor? Especially when poor communities tend to have much higher rates of crime! Are poor folks less worthy of the right to protect themselves and their families while at home or out in public?

Existing gun laws are unconstitutional and the work of evil men. All are created equal in the eyes of God and deserve the right to protect themselves from the threat of great/grave bodily injury or death without exception and without the permission of a government entity.

Let's talk gun violence. It is no secret that gun-related violence is an epidemic in the African-American community. This is not new and this will not change with the passage of constitutional carry because guns are not the problem nor is white-on-black crime the problem. Most gun crimes are intra-racial, meaning white-on-white, black-on-black, etc.

According to an article published by *National Review* on December 5, 2019 entitled "*The Need to Discuss Black-on-Black Crime*", race matters. The data shows that homicide-victimization rates for black men were 3.9 times the national average and that 52 percent of all known homicide victims were black (2017 data).

The article further states that:

*In 2018, where the homicide victim was black, the suspected killer also was 88 percent of the time. And this is not an exceptional situation. From 1976 to 2005, 94 percent of black victims were killed by other African Americans. In fact, as I will demonstrate, high rates of black-on-black killing have been the norm for well over a century.*

Our problem is not guns. The problems that plague the black community are much the same as those that plague our society as a whole and it will kill us all if we do not work together to change it.

The root of the problem is Godlessness which has allowed evil to creep into every home. We have elected officials who seek to rule us rather than implement laws that protect the greater public from criminals.

We have constructed laws that have served to tear apart nuclear families and create fatherless homes or homes with "two mommies" or "two daddies" while incentivizing and glamorizing single moms who just can't cut the mustard raising kids alone which has become painfully obvious.

We have spent trillions of dollars on anti-drug campaigns over the past three decades only now to offer taxpayer-funded needle exchange programs for drug addicts and the list goes on.

Ohio is ranked #2 in the nation in drug overdose deaths. We rank 3<sup>rd</sup> in cases of human/child sexual trafficking. We rank 5<sup>th</sup> in cases of bestiality. Yet our governor, elected

officials and unelected officials who *“just want to keep Ohioans safe”* have failed us in every way. Homicide, suicide and drug abuse plague our state and only God knows the level of crime and violence that is yet to come due to these unwarranted and unconstitutional lock downs.

I urge you to pass H.B. 178 so that all Ohioans – black, brown, white, rich and poor – can freely exercise their rights to arm and protect themselves from crime since the government has failed miserably in doing so, thereby placing us all at risk.

I appreciate your time and am glad to take questions/comments.

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