



Buckeye Firearms Association

Testimony of Rob Sexton

On behalf of Buckeye Firearms Association

Before the House Criminal Justice Committee

May 28th, 2020, 10:00 AM

Chairman Lang, members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I am Rob Sexton, the Legislative Affairs Director for Buckeye Firearms Association. BFA is a civil rights organization that has been defending and advancing the rights of over 4 million Ohio citizens for more than 15 years, with a long and proven record of changing laws for the better.

I am here to express support for House Bill 178. This bill would remove many burdens on law-abiding gun owners which do nothing to reduce crime or save lives.

For example, this bill would eliminate the requirement to notify law enforcement that you are exercising your constitutionally protected right to carry a firearm. It also would do away with victim zones in churches, among other changes.

But the most important change this bill would make is to introduce what is often referred to as Permitless Carry, License Optional Carry, or Constitutional Carry, which is the ability for law-abiding adults to carry a concealed firearm without licensing or other mandated requirements.

This change alone would remove irrational and unnecessary burdens for Ohio citizens who merely wish to exercise their Second Amendment rights and defend themselves when faced with a lethal threat.

The argument in favor of Constitutional Carry is overwhelming:

Carrying Without a License or Permit is a Proven Concept

- 33 states allow open carry without a license or permit. This represents 2/3 or 66% of the United States. This includes Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
- 17 states allow concealed carry without a license or permit. This represents 1/3 or 34% of the United States. This includes Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky,

Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

License Optional Carry Will NOT Change Use-of-Force Standards

- The standard for when use of lethal force is legal for defense of self or others is uniform throughout the United States. It is generally summarized in this way: “You may use lethal force for self-defense when you have a reasonable and honest belief that you are in danger of immediate and unavoidable death or great bodily harm.” This standard will NOT change in any way with License Optional Carry.

License Optional Carry Will NOT Change Human Behavior

- Those who carry legally now with a license will continue to carry legally with or without a license. There is no reason to believe the lack of a license will change a person's behavior. Human behavior tends to be highly consistent over time.
- Those who do not carry now with a license but choose to start carrying after a license is no longer mandated are of no concern. If they're not carrying now without a license because it's illegal, and they're waiting for it to become legal before they carry, they are obviously law-abiding.
- Those who carry illegally now without a license will continue to carry illegally without a license. These are criminals, and criminals will always disobey the law.

License Optional Carry Will NOT Make Law Enforcement More Difficult or Dangerous

- A license does not separate good guys from bad guys. People are either law-abiding or they are not. It's a matter of personal character, not licensing. Those who are good people today will be good people tomorrow. And those who are bad guys today will remain bad guys tomorrow. The people law enforcement needs to worry about are criminals who rarely get a license anyway. That will not change.

This really is a fact-based debate. The law abiding are not a threat to others in Ohio or in any other state. They do not become law abiding because of the presence of a license. Subjecting them to unnecessary requirements does not make them better people. It just burdens them with extra costs and potential to get into trouble for unintentionally violating those unneeded laws or regulations. Meanwhile, those who would do us harm ignore these same laws. This type of law that purport to keep us safer, in fact does not. It is for these reasons; we ask this committee to move HB 178. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.