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30th April, 2019

**Ohio House of Representatives Federalism Committee**

77 S. High St. #12  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Ohio House Bill 178

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today as a proponent of Ohio House Bill 178 (H.B. 178), also known as Constitutional Carry. I am a lifelong Ohio Resident, healthcare provider, and lawful concealed carry permit holder.

I did not grow up around firearms or any gun culture. In fact, I grew up quite opposed to civilian firearms ownership. I fired my first gun at the age of 26, shortly before pursuing the training and licensure requirements to obtain an Ohio concealed carry permit. That was approximately 8 years ago. I did not obtain my firearm or permit as a hobby, or due to an interest in firearms. Instead, I found myself all but helpless in a dangerous situation stemming from a workplace incident which unfortunately made me understand the value of firearms as they pertain to personal protection.

Since that time, I have spent thousands of dollars and tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition on professional firearms training. I continue to spend thousands of dollars per year on firearms training courses, because I believe that carrying a firearm into populated areas comes with a great deal of responsibility. I understand the risks associated with carrying and/or utilizing a deadly weapon in a setting where collateral damage to innocent bystanders and property remains a high possibility. Make no mistake, I hold a strong belief that individuals carrying a firearm should have sufficient training to do so safely and responsibly, and to utilize said firearm safely and efficiently should the need arise.

Many do not realize that Ohio law protects lawful gun owners who choose to openly carry their firearms, and that no permit is required to do so. Yet,

despite the millions of citizens who “open carry” on a daily basis, related incidents resulting in accidents or injury are exceedingly rare. Obtaining a concealed carry permit in Ohio requires only a basic pistol course as an educational prerequisite. These courses are brief, and offer little to no information or training on utilizing a firearm defensively. As someone with extensive firearms training, I can attest that completion of a basic pistol course offers very little in the way of actual firearms training or safe weapons handling. For this reason, I regularly seek out additional training. This comes at a substantial cost when considering the prices of the courses and ammunition, typically totaling thousands of dollars per year.

However, while I feel the hurdles to obtaining a permit to carry concealed present only a modest financial and scheduling inconvenience (paying for a pistol course, allocating the time to take said course, and paying the fees for the permit process), these stipulations are often prohibitive to other law-abiding Ohio citizens, and discourage many from carrying a firearm for personal protection. What I view as a modest inconvenience, many others see as unnecessary hurdles and taxes on practicing a constitutionally-protected right. I routinely encourage friends and family who carry firearms to take additional training courses with me, though most are unable due to the associated financial and scheduling burdens. It should also be noted that an Ohio concealed carry permit requires renewal, and that the holder must also update their address with the local sheriff anytime it changes. As someone who lived in various apartments around Columbus prior to purchasing a home, I can attest that renewing my permit on a yearly basis with each change of address was inconvenient and costly. At this time, the only benefit I see to the permitting process is Ohio’s reciprocity agreement with many other states which I visit on vacations. For this reason alone, I will continue to renew my permit if Ohio H.B. 178 passes. This should serve as a consideration to prove that I am not supporting Ohio H.B. 178 for merely personal reasons.

Many also cite the background check and registration process that comes with obtaining a permit to carry as a measure which is necessary to prevent criminals from legally carrying. However, I disagree. It is already illegal to obtain, possess, or carry a firearm in the commission of criminal activity, if the individual has any severe misdemeanor or felony records, or if the individual is mentally defective. It should go without saying that these individuals generally do not complete the process to obtain a permit, and will carry their weapons illegally regardless of the laws or processes in place.

In summary, I believe the required training and permitting processes for concealed carry offer little to protect Ohio residents, and mostly serve as inconveniences which prevent many otherwise responsible and law-abiding Ohioans from carrying a firearm for protection. I say this as someone who

personally understands the responsibility and risks associated with carrying a firearm, and who personally understands the value of training. I urge you to strongly consider passage of Ohio H.B. 178.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

Sincerely,

Cody D. Fulks