



# THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

FREEDOM RISING

## Testimony before the House Federalism Committee Lennie Jarratt, State Government Relations Manager

**The Heartland Institute**

**May 1, 2019**

Chairman Becker and Members of the Federalism Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss whether a citizen should be required to obtain an Ohio concealed carry license to exercise his or her constitutional right to bear arms, a concept more commonly known as “permitless carry” or “constitutional carry.” Heartland would like to submit the following testimony in support of permitless carry.

My name is Lennie Jarratt. I’m a state government relations manager at The Heartland Institute, a not-for-profit think tank headquartered in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Heartland focuses on providing national, state, and local elected officials with reliable and timely research and analyses of important policy issues.

House Bill 178 would allow any citizen of Ohio who is 21 years old or older and “not prohibited by federal law from firearm possession to carry a concealed deadly weapon without needing a license.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, it would maintain the concealed carry law for those who wish to legally carry in any other states that have concealed carry reciprocity with Ohio.

Seventeen states already allow permitless carry, including Kentucky<sup>2</sup>, Oklahoma<sup>3</sup>, and South Dakota,<sup>4</sup> which passed laws to establish permitless carry earlier this year. Research does not indicate these laws have increased homicide rates or endangered citizens. There is, however, some evidence they have caused a “small meaningful downward pressure on [homicide].”<sup>5</sup>

From 1993 to 2013, firearm ownership has increased by 56 percent, while the gun homicide rate has decreased by 49 percent.<sup>6</sup> This data clearly indicate responsible gun owners are not the problem. They abide by the law while criminals, who will not obtain concealed carry permits regardless of what the law demands, are the problem.

It is the duty of each person to protect themselves and their family. Barriers that prevent this self-protection should be removed. By allowing permitless carry, you would be removing a barrier currently preventing many people from being able to protect themselves. This is especially true for low-income citizens, who often can’t afford the numerous fees required to obtain government permits.

In Ohio, the current cost of a concealed carry license is initially \$67, but only if you have been a resident of Ohio for five years.<sup>7</sup> If a citizen has lived in Ohio for less than five years, the cost rises to \$91. In addition, those seeking to obtain a license must pay for a certified concealed

carry training course, which typically costs \$75 to \$100.<sup>8</sup> Many low-income residents do not have the extra \$140–\$200 needed, nor the time required, to attend the course.

Data show there will not be an increase in gun-related homicide rates due to permitless carry, so there is no valid justification for requiring citizens to purchase a costly license just to exercise a constitutional right, and, as I previously stated, such a mandate disproportionately endangers lower-income people and their families.

I encourage you to support permitless carry. Thank you for your time today.

**For more information about The Heartland Institute’s work, please visit our websites at [www.heartland.org](http://www.heartland.org) or <http://news.heartland.org>, or call Lennie Jarratt at 312/377-4000. You can reach Lennie Jarratt by email at [ljarratt@heartland.org](mailto:ljarratt@heartland.org).**

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<sup>1</sup> HB 178, March 29, 2019, The Ohio Legislature, 133rd General Assembly,

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA133-HB-178>

<sup>2</sup> “Kentucky becomes 17th state that allows concealed carry without a permit in all or virtually all the state,” Crime Prevention Research Center, <https://crimeresearch.org/2019/03/kentucky-becomes-17th-state-that-allows-concealed-carry-without-a-permit-in-all-or-virtually-all-the-state/>

<sup>3</sup> “Oklahoma becomes 16th state that allows concealed carry without a permit in all or virtually all the state,” Crime Prevention Research Center, <https://crimeresearch.org/2019/02/oklahoma-becomes-16th-state-that-allows-concealed-carry-without-a-permit-in-all-or-virtually-all-the-state/>

<sup>4</sup> “South Dakota becomes 15th state that allows concealed carry without a permit in all or virtually all the state,” Crime Prevention Research Center, <https://crimeresearch.org/2019/02/south-dakota-become-15th-state-that-allows-concealed-carry-without-a-permit-in-all-or-virtually-all-the-state/>

<sup>5</sup> “Constitutional Carry Certainty,” Gun Facts, February, 22, 2017, <http://www.gunfacts.info/blog/constitutional-carry-certainty/>

<sup>6</sup> “Chart of the day: More guns, less gun violence between 1993 and 2013,” American Enterprise Institute, December 4, 2015, <http://www.aei.org/publication/chart-of-the-day-more-guns-less-gun-violence-between-1993-and-2013/>

<sup>7</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions about Ohio Concealed Carry Permits,” Concealed Carry, <https://ohio.concealedcarry.com/frequently-asked-questions-about-ohio-concealed-carry-permits/>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*