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OHIOANS FOR CONCEALED CARRY  
HOUSE FEDERALISM COMMITTEE TESTIMONY ON HB 178  
MAY 8, 2019

Chair Becker, Vice-Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller and members of the House Federalism Committee. My name is Doug Deeken and I am a Director of Ohioans for Concealed Carry (OFCC). I wish to testify in favor of HB 178.

OFCC's mission has always been to get us to "Vermont" style carry, which is to say essentially unregulated carry.

First, let me reinforce a point made last week. This bill will not enable anybody who cannot carry a gun today to be able to carry a gun tomorrow. The prime effect of HB178 would be to enable people to put on a jacket while exercising their, "...right to bear arms for their defense and security;"(Ohio Constitution Article I, Section 4). Given that the weather in Ohio is both non-tropical and often quirky the ability to legally don a jacket is prudent.

Let's now spend a brief bit of time remembering how we got here. Since 2004, we Ohioans find ourselves in the "Shall Issue" phase of concealed handgun licensing. Prior to that, the old carrying concealed weapons law had been around since the 1970s. For roughly 30 years the only relief we had was the onerous "affirmative defense" found therein. In practice, that meant that everybody caught with a gun got hauled to jail for a judge to sort out in the morning. That was no way to exercise a fundamental right.

While I am not a lawyer I do know that the Ohio Supreme Court created case law reinforcing the legality of open carry. The only question remaining is whether or not we should, and if so how, regulate concealed carry. Since 2004 we have permitted concealed carry with gradually fewer and fewer restrictions. Despite repeated dire predictions of "blood in the streets" the Ohio experience with concealed handguns has been boringly similar to every other state; that is to say that violent crime has actually decreased as more people legally carry guns.

Perhaps OFCC's favorite part of this bill is the repeal of the active notification requirement {bill lines 1006-1011; ORC 2923.12 (B)(1)}. This is essential because the only way that someone carrying concealed today knows that they must "promptly inform" an officer is because of the training on the law required for the license. By removing a strict need for licensure we potentially expose a great many otherwise law-abiding Ohioans to a legal trap with an M1 penalty. Thus, the active notification repeal is an essential aspect of this bill.

Constitutional Carry is an idea whose time has come. We have slowly dipped our toe into the waters of concealed carry for the last 15 years after 30 years of "affirmative defense only" carry. The fears of most reasonable Ohioans have been allayed. All that remains is to remove the government shackles on our rights. Strike a blow for freedom in this 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly and pass HB178.

Again, Chair Becker and members of the House Federalism Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important matter. I would be glad to answer questions.