



Major Theodore Owens, USA, Ret.
President of OASIS - Ohio Association of Security & Investigation Services
Oral Testimony - before Ohio House Federalism Committee
House Bill 178
May 08, 2019

Good Morning Chairman Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Ohio House Federalism Committee. I am a proudly retired officer of the US Army and combat veteran, a former Columbus Police Officer - Detective, an International Security Contractor with service in the Middle East, and a Combat Skills Instructor at the Nigerian Command and General Staff College. I'm currently the agency owner of Ohio Special Services Group – a private investigations and security services agency here in the Columbus, Ohio area. I was also appointed by Governor Kasich to the Ohio Private Investigations and Security Services Commission from June 2014 to February 2018. I am here to testify as a “Proponent” for House Bill 178.

Last week when I testified before you, I attempted to introduce the Ohio Private Investigation and Security Services profession and our association to you. In this testimony I hope to give you a short vignette into the day to day world of how we need to conduct business yet are prohibited to do so by an ill-conceived law.

Allow me to introduce you to male Security Officer # 1. I won't use his name or the company that they work for to preserve their anonymity. This Security Officer was on his way to work on a Friday night. He was stopped by a local law enforcement agency for the minor misdemeanor traffic violation of having a headlight out. He worked an armed assignment overnight and was wearing his company uniform as he needed to make a brief stop at Walmart to pick up some energy drinks, snacks, and pay on his car loan there (something I was unaware of that you could do at a Walmart). The Police Officers informed he of the reason for the stop (a valid one) and asked to see his drivers license. He produced his valid driver's license, insurance card, and several receipts from an auto repair shop indicating that his car was just recently in the shop for that same issue and that it still persisted (signifying a potentially larger mechanical problem). He informed them that he was an armed Security Officer heading to work after he makes a brief stop at the Walmart up the road and give them his State of Ohio issued registrant ID card with firearms bearer notation (FAB) on the rear of his ID card. After making the standard checks via radio or MDC in their vehicle they returned issued him a verbal warning regarding the headlight issue and released him. The Security Officer went to Walmart did his shopping, concluded his business at the checkout counter and as he was leaving the Police Officers from the earlier traffic stop stepped out of the



Walmart Security Office. Unbeknownst to him, those Officers had entered the Walmart shortly after his arrival and were now in the security office watching him via the surveillance camera system. As the Security Officer was about to exit the Walmart, they stopped him, told him there was a problem from the earlier stop, relinquished him of his sidearm, told him he was under arrest, and placed him in handcuffs. He was charged with Improper Handling of a Firearm in a Motor Vehicle (a career killing felony) and also written a traffic citation for the faulty headlight (the same minor misdemeanor traffic violation that he was given a verbal warning for earlier by them).

The story gets better from there. He was taken to Franklin County Jail in his paramilitary looking Security Officer uniform (once again on a Friday night, a high-volume intake night). He was placed in Jail attire where he was housed in a general population cell with approximately twelve (12) to sixteen (16) other inmates. One of these other inmates recognized him from an incident at his job post from a few weeks earlier where the man had to be removed for causing a problem while being drunk and disorderly. Inside the jail cell the man decided it was the perfect opportunity to enact some measure of revenge. What the man didn't know was that the security officer was a wrestler in HS and also trains in Brazilian Ju-Jitsu currently. To make a long story short, the security officer had to defend himself inside the jail cell and this other gentleman was placed in a rear naked choke hold and made to take a short nap. This could have gone horribly wrong and had life altering effects for everyone involved. This Security Officer spent Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday night (3 nights) in jail before appearing at arraignment session on Monday morning when he was bonded out of jail. The company this security officer worked for had to scramble to back-fill his shift immediately that Friday night, and for those subsequent nights. Simply because he was an armed private security officer, heading to work and because of the loophole that exists within Ohio's Concealed Handgun License law and our registrants who are licensed under [Ohio Revised Code 4749.10](#) were not originally included into [Ohio Revised Code 109.801](#) like they should have been when Ohio became a concealed carry state many years ago.

This is just one of several similar stories that I'm familiar with over the past several years of hearing about and learning more on this issue from around Ohio. As I stated last week, Ohio becoming a constitutional carry state is one step of many in the right direction to fix a law that has been disastrous to our profession and to our ability to conduct lawful business operations in Ohio. The next step is to add registrants of [Ohio Revised Code 4749.10](#) into [Ohio Revised Code 109.801](#). Several other states in America have gone to a constitutional carry law and they have made it work. Ohio can make it work also.



Ohio Association of Security & Investigation Services

Dedicated to Serving Ohio Security and Investigative Professionals

I will end my testimony today as I did last week, Ohio's Licensed Private Investigators and Licensed Security Officers contribute to a "Safer Ohio" on a daily basis in many different ways. On behalf of OASIS and Ohio's 700 Licensed Provider Companies over 25,000 registered Private Investigators and/or Security Officers, we urge you to please support our profession by voting for this Bill and adding in those additional protections we desperately need. We urge you to ask other members of the Ohio House of Representative to vote for this Bill on the Floor. Thank you for your time in listening to me today. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have regarding my testimony