

Columbus, May 20, 2019

To the chairman of the Federalism committee, Mr. John Becker,

My name is Carolina López-Ruiz. Thank you for letting me present this testimony, as a wife and mother, a Professor at OSU, and above all a US citizen.

On May 8<sup>th</sup> we heard the testimony of those defending this dangerous legislation. I won't respond by commenting on the state of gun violence in our state and our country. Others have or will do that. Instead, I want to respond to their argument about fundamental "rights and freedoms." My message boils down to this: *your rights end where mine begin*. I am not convinced that the current law limits their freedom, while deregulating conceal-carry *does not* make me feel any safer or more free. HB 178 will encourage illegal owners as well as untrained people to carry concealed guns. In fact, gun owners themselves, including those giving proponent testimony, emphasized that training is essential. Are we supposed to trust that ALL gun owners will follow such training on their own initiative? Of course not. The same way I cannot trust that every driver around me in the highway will drive responsibly. But I can at least know that as a society, we are sane enough to *require* a minimum threshold of knowledge, ability, and practice to be on the road.

But there is a deeper problem in the logic of their argument: One argument that you heard on May 8<sup>th</sup> is that Ohioans need to have unrestricted access to guns because you, our government, intend to attack us, in a "black helicopter" scenario, and introduce tyranny. -- I am not exaggerating. You heard the witness invoke Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, communist Cambodia, and other infamous twentieth-century military regimes. They think

that we are next. So are our Commonwealth peers in Australia and New Zealand, because they passed common sense-gun regulations on the wake of mass shootings.—Only you know whether you intend to do this, whether you are conspiring against Ohio’s population. I assume that you are not. In that case, reason tells us that unrestricted access to guns is *more* dangerous to Ohioans than their own government.

Finally, this “permit-less carry” bill is not about lawful gun owners’ right to just “put on a jacket” while *open* carrying their guns. That argument is disingenuous. Some members of the committee acknowledged that in fact most people do *not* carry their firearms in the open, and there are reasons for that. On the other hand, supporters of the bill and members of the committee acknowledged that the constitution *does* allow for the regulation of the right to bear arms—as confirmed by Justice Scalia in the Heller decision—just as it allows regulations for any other rights. As Representative Miller stated the other day, let’s consider freedom of movement a constitutional (indeed a human) right. Why do we have to be bothered every time we travel, not only by producing documents, but having our bodies and our belongings scrutinized and screened—even our water confiscated if we mistakenly leave it in our bag? Is the right to be hydrated not an essential right, too? The fact is, I am statistically *much* more likely to die of a gunshot wound as I go by my daily life (including when I teach) than I am of dying on an airplane crash.<sup>1</sup> And yet, every time I travel, I comply with the safety regulations. We all comply, because that’s what it takes to be part of a community. We should be able to keep our basic freedoms and still *to be bothered* with

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers are 1 chance in 285 for an assault by firearm and 1 chance in 8,527 for an accidental firearms discharge, versus 1 in 5 million chances for the airplane crash, according to statistics for 2017 posted by the Insurance Information Institute: <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-mortality-risk>

regulations, even if we believe they are *not* necessary *for us* individually. We owe it to each other. *Your rights end where mine begin.*