

Emma Marks

Testimony Opposed to HB 178

Ohio House Federalism Committee

I am submitting this testimony as a constituent of this legislative body. I am a student at Wilmington College and a community member in Wilmington, OH. I am also a member of the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence, an organization representing over 10,000 Ohioans fighting to keep their communities safe from gun violence. The coalition works with diverse organizations like the YWCA, the Ohio Council of Churches, the Catholic Conference, The University of Toledo College of Law and College of Public Health among many others to advocate for an end to gun violence. Finally, I am the volunteer Ohio Legislative Coordinator for Amnesty International USA. In this position, I work to ensure that my home state is respecting the human rights of all Ohioans. It is my deeply held conviction that HB 178 is a violation of basic human rights, especially the right to life and the freedom to live without fear.

Hunting is a tradition in my family. As a small child, I remember watching my oldest brother pack up to leave for deer camp. I felt a mixture of jealousy and fascination as I watched him prepare for the week of hunting. When I turned 12, it was finally time for me to learn how to hunt. In Pennsylvania, the state where I was raised, I had to attend a hunter safety course. This two-day training included detailed information and practice on how to carry a firearm safely, how to identify your target, and the laws that regulate carrying a firearm in the state. At the end of the course, I had to take an exam to prove that I understood the immense responsibility of possessing a deadly weapon. Nine years later, I still remember and rely on the training that this course provided. As Gary Evens, an NRA-Certified Instructor and Range Safety Officer said about firearms training, "Training is good, more training is better."

The value of the training I received makes me immensely concerned about HB 178. Without proper training, carrying a weapon can be incredibly dangerous. According to the CDC, between 2006 and 2016 6,885 people in the U.S. died from unintentional shootings. After an accidental shooting, each victim's loved ones are left to deal with the

heartbreak of a senseless loss. When the tragedy of accidental shootings are already a reality for many families in the US and Ohio, I am appalled that our legislators are making guns more available with less training, and I am not alone. Eighty-eight percent of Americans think you should get a permit before carrying a concealed handgun in public.

As a young person, I am filled with hope that my generation will see the end of the epidemic of gun violence. I know that this change will not be brought forward only through legislative reform, but also through a shift in culture where we recognize the immense responsibilities that come with possessing a firearm and through the hard work of community-based organizations that find long-term solutions to the long-term causes of gun violence. As we work to make our communities safe, however, we deserve a government that supports our work. By making concealed carry in public spaces without permits or training easier, HB 178 would make my community less safe. I hope that the senators on this committee will stand with young people like myself who value balancing the rights and responsibilities of gun ownership. Vote no on HB 178.