

Chairman Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Minority Member Miller and members of the House Federalism Committee, I would like to first and foremost thank you for your service to the state of Ohio, and thank you for taking your citizens' opinions into consideration when proposing a bill such as House Bill 178.

My name is Emma Green, and I am a proud student at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio.

I come from a family in which both of my parents are responsible gun owners. My father especially has exemplified the image of a responsible gun owner throughout his life, teaching all of his children about gun safety, and even going out of his way to obtain a concealed carry permit when he himself does not intend on carrying a concealed weapon any time soon. On one occasion recently, when he accidentally caught himself speeding and was pulled over by an Ohio officer, he presented his concealed carry license to the officer. The officer asked him what kind of firearm he carried, and my father kindly explained that he didn't have one. Confused, the officer questioned further about why he would have a license if he didn't intend on carrying. My father gave him two reasons, first being, "it's his right, and he'll exercise it as long as he can" and the second being that "he wanted to learn how to safely carry".

I tell you this today because I think my father's relationship explains with his concealed carry permit is one that many gun owners share with theirs. Gun owners in this country pride themselves on being both educated, and responsible in the carrying of their firearms, especially if they are concealed.

I fear that if House Bill 178 is passed, the population of gun owners concealed carrying in public spaces in Ohio will expand from the group of responsible and educated gun owners to those who do not care to be educated about gun safety, and those who would normally be barred from obtaining a concealed carry permit under our current law. In the right hands, guns are incredibly safe objects. In the wrong hands, they are lethal weapons. I stand in opposition to House Bill 178 because I think it can very easily place concealed weapons in the wrong hands.

I personally do not fear guns, as I have grown up around them being used responsibly at the shooting range and during hunting season. Rather, I fear gun violence, which takes the lives of over a thousand Ohioans every year, and injures even more. Preventing gun violence should be a priority for Ohio legislators because it is a priority for so many students and community members like myself. The vast majority (about 88%) of Americans support requiring concealed carriers to have a permit in order to carry a concealed firearm in public. Other states, such as Alaska, Arizona, and Missouri which have passed bills similar to this one have experienced higher rates of aggravated assaults with a firearm after the bill has become law.

In short, I do not think that House Bill 178 will promote educated and responsible concealed carrying, but rather, the opposite. The current process to obtain a concealed carry permit is beneficial to those who choose to concealed carry, and as a result, is beneficial to the rest of Ohio by making the rest of us safer.

Thank you for your consideration,
Emma M. Green