

Testimony on House Bill 178
House Federalism Committee
Rep. John Becker, Chair
Rep. Reggie Stoltzfus, Vice Chair
Rep. Adam C. Miller, Ranking Member

Submitted by:
Jane F. Myers

Chair Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on House Bill 178.

I am submitting my testimony against House Bill 178 as a person familiar with firearms. Many years ago, I was the holder of a pistol permit in New York State. I owned and shot a Smith & Wesson K22 revolver at a shooting club to which my husband belonged. I was taught rigorous firearms safety before my first session with the club. I was not a very accurate shooter and did not really enjoy the sport.

My opposition to House Bill 178 is twofold.

First, the professionals who carry firearms in their work, mainly the military and law enforcement, have employment requirements that weed out those who are physically, mentally and emotionally unfit to carry lethal weapons. Once hired, the employees in those positions are not allowed to carry firearms and ammunition until they have satisfied stringent requirements for safe handling, safe storage and full and complete understanding of exactly how dangerous firearms are when used carelessly or even intentionally. In addition they learn of things relating to the logistics, velocity, range, trajectory etc. of bullets, once fired from the gun.

The proponents of House Bill 178 would have us all believe that none of those safety precautions should be required of civilian citizen owners of firearms!!

Second, we often hear the argument that laws limiting the use or ownership of firearms will make no difference because criminals will always access firearms and commit crimes. I will counter that argument with the very simple fact that laws are not written so that criminals will stop committing crimes. Laws are written so that we can live in an orderly society. Laws are written so that all people will know and understand the rules and even the reasons why those rules are put in place. Laws are written so that when someone breaks the rules law enforcement and the courts have a framework by which to arrest, try, convict and apply punishment to the people breaking the law. Indeed, this bill, if passed, would make current laws regarding who is restricted from owning a firearm virtually unenforceable. If an individual is pulled over for a traffic violation and they are carrying a concealed weapon, how would a police officer know that they are not prohibited from owning firearms, without a permit that indicates this? As far as I know, most proponents and sponsors of this bill are not arguing that there should be no restrictions on firearm ownership whatsoever. But that would be the unintended consequence of this bill.

Our emphasis must always be on the greatest good and civil rights for ALL citizens. Thank you!