



Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

May 22, 2019

Testimony in Opposition to HB 178

Submitted by Toby Hoover for the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

Chairman Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Minority Member Miller and members of the House Federalism Committee

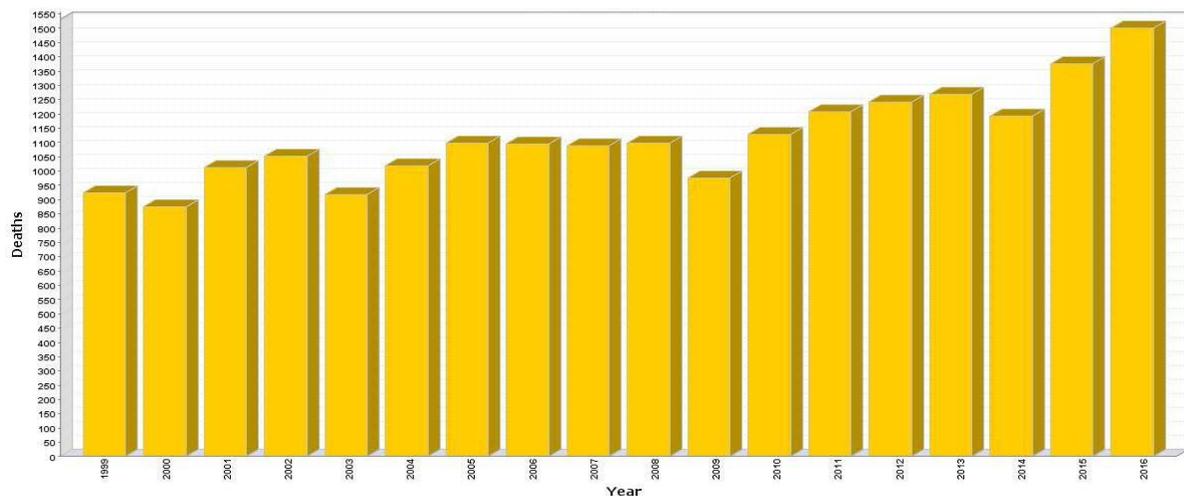
Thank you for listening to Ohioans on this very important safety issue.

After reading the sponsor and proponent testimony from the hearings earlier this month I am aware that this bill is not about guns or defense or rights. The testimony clearly sounds warnings against government. There is a lot of talk about fear and a belief that there should not be any regulations on weapons. This bill suggests that millions more people will carry weapons in Ohio. Putting people in our public space who are suspicious of everyone and believe that they will need to defend themselves any minute is a crisis waiting to happen.

Numerous times the proponent testimony repeated erroneous rhetoric that those of us that want to keep our kids and families safe predict 'blood in the streets'. They might ask themselves where that information came from. The gun lobby uses that phrase often. It is also a phrase used by domestic terrorists. Language sells fear and when anger and accessibility to weapons is added the fear takes over and we have violence.

There also seems to be an overrepresentation of rural areas yet it is the large cities that are dealing with increased crime.

The Ohio gun death numbers show a constant increase in crime and that is with trained CCW holders among us.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2016 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released December, 2017. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2016, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Jul 6, 2018 5:10 PM
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In Ohio there were 934 gun deaths in 2003, CCW passed in 2004 and by 2017 that number has risen to 1589. *Center for Disease Control*

934 to 1589 lives lost is a 70% increase. Should we really be considering making it easier to carry lethal weapons when more guns have not reduced gun deaths?

There is not a suggestion that CCW in 2004 caused the increase but it did not help and it is not reasonable to think untrained permit less carrying will make us safer. Suicides average 60% of the firearm deaths in Ohio each year and studies support that many decisions are made and carried out spontaneously. Having a lethal weapon immediately accessible increases the chances of a fatality (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/risk/>), (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/case-fatality/>)

Unfortunately, there is also an acceptance of the rhetoric that there are only 'good guys' and 'bad guys' in our country and that each of them will always behave that way. This allows the conclusion that somehow we will be able to recognize the 'bad guys' within a weak system that will not be checking their background or have any oversight on the permit less carriers' behavior.

Each day we see that someone that everyone considered a good person resort to violence on their families and friends. Instead of looking at violence as the public health crisis that it is this bill allows more people to carry hidden loaded weapons in public as an answer to their fears and fantasies.

HB 178 will allow people over the age of 21 to carry hidden loaded weapons in public without a permit or license. Ohioans can also carry loaded weapons openly without a permit. The gun owners that now want to carry concealed readily admit that they know the general public doesn't approve so that mandates them covering their firearms so they are hidden.

We note that the bill also changes the name to concealed weapons rather than handguns. That in itself is a move forward to admit they are designed to be weapons. The negative is that the change is to allow more kinds of weapons (knives). It also allows all persons to carry into school safety zones as long as they don't enter the school! With three school shooting in less than a few weeks recently we surely don't think that is a good idea.

Anger and the easy access to guns are known contributors to violence. Even people with licenses to carry hidden weapons commit crimes and reports say there were 47 fatal shootings by CCW holders since 2007 in Ohio.

Carrying was put into law in 2004 with the claim from the pro-gun forces that Ohioans would be the best trained, have background checks performed by their sheriffs, and have a competency certification after taking a class on the rules, laws and some proficiency. The claim was that the permit holders were the most law abiding in the state. HB 178 will prevent any research or oversight on the people carrying loaded weapons because there will be no records. Last year 5053 permits were revoked, suspended or denied. How will law enforcement revoke or suspend the carrying of unlicensed carriers? The calling card for gun owners that want to carry are that they are the 'good' guys. We suggest everyone is a good guy until they're not.

With no permits or records there will be **no oversight** or conclusions on the behaviors or crimes by people that carry weapons in public.

The following persons will be free to carry near our families.

Unqualified categories of persons will be able to carry loaded hidden weapons including those:

- **without** training, a background check, the required competency certification
- **charged** with misdemeanor crimes including felonies, drug offenses & assault
- **convicted** of some assaults, drug offenses and a misdemeanor assault of a peace officer
- **convicted** of resisting arrest and with a suspended license because of an interaction with law enforcement

non state residents would also be allowed to carry in Ohio

Other invitations to the loss of life are:

- **The elimination of** the requirement to notify law enforcement that a licensee is carrying a weapon when stopped and permits expungement of previous convictions for not notifying.
- Carrying a weapon with or without a permit does not give law enforcement grounds to search, seize or detain a law-abiding person – again how will we be able to recognize the law abiding person
- Ohioans could carry other hidden weapons such as **knives**
- Carrying without a permit would allow them to be in **school zones** as long as they don't enter the school and in a courthouse if they **leave the weapon** with the officer in charge.

Sponsors claim the right to carry loaded weapons is a 'God Given Right'. This is the cry of fearful men that ignore the right and gift of life. Sponsors and proponents also ignore that our country gave us the right to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Hiding behind laws that arm us against one another promotes the culture of violence and fear.

Defending the second amendment is an excuse as the courts have ruled to allow having a gun **in your home and that the second amendment is not absolute.**

We ask you to consider all Ohioans and not just the minority that want to be armed at all times. There are a lot of references to gun owner rights but they seem to ignore everyone's right to life and the freedom from gun violence.

On a personal note I am a survivor of a gun violence victim and I can speak to the horror of violence and the lifelong scars it causes. I hear some claim that this bill will make it easier for those that can't afford competency and safety classes even though they can afford a gun. I hear that it is inconvenient for some to have to take time and money to be able to carry a gun in public and we should make it easier for them. I admit that I react to anyone's claim of inconvenience because I can tell you how inconvenient it is to be a widow at the age of 30 with two children ages 4 & 8 because of the easy access to guns.

I also know what it is like to not have the money to do things. I know what it is like to have found out just what this culture of violence is about. I don't wish it on anyone. Fear is controlling our lives and this bill is encouraging it by confirming that we all need to be at the ready to defend ourselves at all times. HB 178 is another step in the wrong direction.

More people playing judge and jury and then taking action to use lethal force is something that will not cultivate a peaceful society.

Other states are moving forward, we are not. Other countries put us to shame. They put their citizens first before the love of guns.

This bill is addressing a problem that does not exist. We would all be better to address the problem of gun violence with research, admit that it is a public health problem and honor the safety of our families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Toby Hoover
Survivor
Founder
Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence