

Testimony for the Federalism Committee, Ohio State Legislature Rep. John Becker, Chairman
May 29 and June 5, 2019

H.B. 178, Concealed Weapons License

May it please the Committee,

I write in opposition to H.B. 178, Concealed Weapons License. I have worked as a clinical psychologist for 35 years in Ohio and seen first-hand the terrible effects of suicide on families. For the past 7 years, I have served as the Evaluator for Ohio's Federal State Suicide Prevention (Garrett Lee Smith) grant, Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation, grantee. As such, I have become even more familiar with the dangers posed by easy access to guns among the target population for the grant, youth ages 10-24. Research and experience are clear: easy access to guns increases suicide, especially among young men who are more likely to die by suicide.

Though there are restrictions on gun violence research funding at the Federal level, much quality research has been done under the auspices of states, foundations, and other policy initiatives. Here are a few of the relevant conclusions:

- Most gun deaths are suicides (about 2/3); firearms are the most of suicide lethal means, with 85% of attempts using a gun resulting in fatality. Youth suicide often involves the gun of a parent or adult in the household; safe storage can reduce youth suicide by up to 82%, whereas unfettered access could increase it. States with high rates of gun ownership have higher suicide rates than states with lower gun ownership. This is true even when rates of mental illness, drug and alcohol

abuse, and other factors related to suicide. Suicides were almost twice as high in the high-gun states as in the low-gun states. (Miller, 2007).

- Last week, a study published in the *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* (Donohue, Aneja & Weber, 2019), used updated methodology to show that right-to-carry (RTC) laws *increase*, not decrease, crime. Unlike the previous estimate by Lott and Mustard, the new study used more complete state panel data (through 2014) and new statistical techniques. The synthetic control approach finds that RTC laws are associated with 13–15 percent *higher* aggregate violent crime rates 10 years after adoption.

I request the Committee's consideration of these findings and urge rejection of H.B. 178.

Respectfully submitted,

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References

- Donohue, JJ, Aneja, A, Weber, KD. Right-to-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Control Analysis. *J Empir Legal Stud.* 2019, 16(2): 198-247. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jels12219>.
- Miller M, Lippmann SJ, Azrael D, Hemenway D. Household firearm ownership and rates of suicide across the 50 United States. *J Trauma.* 2007 Apr;62(4):1029-34.