

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: Anna Jones

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for reading this and allowing me the opportunity to share my concerns about proposed legislation HB 178. My name is Anna Jones and I am testifying today as a licensed k-12 English teacher, mother, and lifelong resident of Columbus. While I support the constitutional right to bear arms, this proposed law dismantles the few remaining safeguards in place for the general public, when individuals who should not be allowed to carry concealed firearms attempt to do so.

Specifically:

- The safeguard requiring a permit. Currently, in order to obtain a CCW permit in the state of Ohio, you must:
  - complete 8 hours of training
  - schedule an appt, in advance
  - pay a fee
  - complete a background and mental competency check
  - fill out an application

Removing the permit requirement means bypassing all of these “stops” along the way that are meant to hinder impulsive actions and protect the general public. In addition, removing the permit requirement removes the background check requirement, and enables those charged with pending felonies and violence-related crimes to legally carry hidden, loaded weapons in public. Thus, this legislation paves the way for impulsive action and magnifies the danger to the citizens of this state.

In states where “Constitutional Carry” laws have passed, gun violence has increased substantially. In Alaska, for example, gun violence has increased by 82% since the passage of permitless carry in 2003. This is not the scenario anyone wants for our state.

There is no justifiable reason why someone who wants to carry a concealed firearm cannot follow the law currently in place. To expunge the few requirements we currently have for concealed carry holders does not protect the public at large; it only serves to embolden those who should not obtain or carry concealed firearms to do so.

Please give serious consideration to the litany of community members voicing concern over this bill. Requiring a permit that includes a background check and training does not infringe on anyone’s constitutional right to bear arms; it merely provides a few safety checks for everyone in the process. People live in the state of Ohio because it is NOT Alaska, and we want our

midwestern values to serve as guiding principles. We are depending on you to make decisions that will keep us safe, not expose us to greater uncertainty and ambiguity. Please ask yourselves which of the following scenarios you would feel safest in, with your children at your side:

- a) lunch at McDonald's, sitting adjacent to a twenty-something male with a gun holster bulge at his hip, knowing that he has likely not completed any training in the proper storage and use of his firearm (because the law no longer requires it), and he hasn't undergone any type of background or mental health check (because the law no longer requires it).
- b) Lunch at McDonald's, sitting adjacent to a twenty-something male with a gun holster bulge at his hip, knowing he likely has completed training and undergone a background and mental health check, because the law still requires it.

I know that I would feel safer for my children and myself in scenario b.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony,

Anna Jones