

Testimony opposing HB 178

Submitted by Dina Arias, Constituent from Dublin

Two months ago, on March 31st, I read a letter to the editor of the Columbus Dispatch, written by a man who is a military veteran, a member of the NRA, a concealed handgun license holder and a lifelong firearms enthusiast.

This is what he wrote:

[...] I am deeply disappointed in the recently announced legislation introduced in the Ohio House that would allow Ohioans to carry a concealed firearm without training or background check.

The Second Amendment rights we enjoy come with an individual and collective responsibility to do so in a way that promotes responsible gun ownership. Mandatory training establishes a baseline of competency and gives the public reassurance that those who carry guns do so with the proper technical proficiency and knowledge of the law.

The gun community knows full well that the use of firearms without training is a bad idea.

Reading his letter inspired me to write to my state representative and my state senator, as well as to Governor DeWine. I agree with the letter writer that along with Second Amendment rights comes responsibility – this would include mandatory training to prove competency and technical proficiency, as well as knowledge of the law. Based on the

newly proposed HB 178, apparently this is entirely too much to ask of Ohio's gun-owning populace!

It is unbelievable to me that some in our Ohio legislature think it would be fine for residents to be navigating our streets carrying handguns, rifles, and shotguns -- PERMIT-LESS -- without even the minimal 8 hours of classroom instruction and 2 hours of live training!! Mind you, the 8 hours has already been pared down substantially from 12 hours (to 8 hours). This happened about five years ago.

At that time, the president of the Dayton Fraternal Order of Police was quoted as saying, "I personally think lowering the training hours is a bad idea. I think it's low to begin with. To lower it even more is a bad idea." He added, "Carrying a firearm entails tremendous responsibility. Training should help students understand not only how to use a gun, but when to use it — and when not to use it." (Dayton Daily News, 12/26/14)

Also at that time, five years ago, Westerville Police Chief and president of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police said (and I quote), "Reducing the number of training hours is disappointing." ...And, "Introducing a firearm into public situations in general is dangerous. We want to make sure people are trained." (Dayton Daily News 12/26/14)

So, now, the goal has somehow become to completely eliminate all training?? In the handling and utilization of a lethal weapon?? Seriously??

Take into consideration that in the state of Ohio one needs a license to be an upholsterer or an auctioneer. In order to work in a hair salon, one needs over 1,000 hours of training! I recently was required to take 16 hours of training to work with an autistic student a few hours a week.

Yet, persons walking the streets of Ohio carrying lethal weapons should not have any training – zero, zip, zilch. Where is the logic in that?

My husband is a hunter, and many of our friends and family members are hunters or own guns for protection. From not one of them have I ever heard the rallying cry, “The government is trying to take away your guns!!” On the contrary, these people prefer that gun owners be properly trained and licensed. They appreciate common sense gun regulations.

Regarding another aspect of HB 178: I wonder how our law enforcement agencies feel about the fact that motorists would no longer be required to notify officers that they have a lethal weapon in the car, when stopped! It’s positively egregious that we would endorse a practice such as this that would deliberately put our officers in harm’s way!

And lastly, the fact that Gov. Mike DeWine's office has stated that he is “looking forward to following [this bill's] movement through the legislative process,” is disheartening, to say the least.

Legislation that supports removing ALL training, licensing, and background checks from the gun-ownership equation is Extreme, Unwise and Unhealthy for our citizenry. All the rights --with no responsibility-- is the wrong path to follow!

Thank you for your time.