



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

Testimony in Opposition of HB 178
Chief Bruce Pijanowski, Delaware Police Department
Representing the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police

Good Morning Chairman Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Ohio House Federalism Committee.

My name is Bruce Pijanowski. I am the Chief of Police for the City of Delaware and I represent the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. As a representative of OACP, I am here to express concerns about the provisions of HB 178.

OACP is not here to express opposition to the Second Amendment or the right the carry concealed weapons. What we are concerned with is the removal of requirements that help to insure the legal concealed carry of firearms, removal of training requirements, and with officer safety implications of certain provisions of this legislation.

This conversation can get contentious, but there must be some balance and a logical discussion. There is a difference between infringements on the Second Amendment and restrictions that states are legally permitted to legislate. There are currently reasonable restrictions to gun ownership and possession that are legal and just. Our current law contains requirements in the form of background checks and safety training that assure safe and legal concealed carry. This discussion is not anti-gun, it is really about what we find reasonable. OACP submits that the current law regarding concealed carry is not onerous and should remain in its current form.

Of particular concern to us is the provision that would remove the duty to notify. Law enforcement cannot interpret intentions and we work at times in fast moving, volatile and confusing scenes, and must make split second decisions. Not every traffic stop is on a well-lit quintessential small town main street. We are often working in high crime neighborhoods where our services are needed. We do not have the benefit of hindsight, which makes things cleaner, safer and more sterile than the actual event. We respect the lethality of the firearm, and we train to be safe. To remove the duty to notify is setting us all up for confrontation and potentially tragic failure. Your law enforcement officers will honor your rights, and we ask that you respect our concern for public safety. A simple notification achieves that. People that legally carry firearms should have no reason to fear notifying the police, just as we have no reason to be concerned with people that legally carry firearms.

Equally troubling is that many of the categories of people who would be able to carry concealed under this legislation includes people with convictions for crimes of violence, including violence directed toward law enforcement. These concerns are such that some members of OACP view these provisions as anti-law enforcement. I understand the

impact of that statement, but your constituents in blue also have an opinion that they are entitled to and that you need to consider. Our commitment is to being part of the discussion in finding the right balance between gun ownership, public safety and officer safety.

In closing, we would ask that you carefully consider whether it is reasonable to require a background check and obtain basic safety training to carry a concealed firearm in Ohio. Is it reasonable to ask that those that carry concealed simply tell law enforcement that they are carrying when in contact with the police? Is it reasonable to restrict persons with certain convictions, especially crimes of violence, from carrying concealed? OACP would submit that the answer is yes, it is reasonable, and we ask that you take the opinion of those that are on the front line of public safety into consideration when debating this legislation.

I would like to thank you for considering our concerns, and I would be happy to answer any questions.