

June 19, 2019

The Honorable John Becker Chairperson, Federalism Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Opposition to HB 174/178, the “Permitless Carry” bill

Dear Representative Becker and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in opposition to House Bill 178. My name is Julie Elkus and I am a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio. I am here today to express my concerns regarding this bill and its potential impact on the safety of all Ohio citizens.

I have three daughters who were in elementary school at the time of Columbine. I never dreamt I would fear for their safety when they were in elementary, middle and high school, when they went off to college or when they attended services in a synagogue – but I have good reason for fearing gun violence in all of those settings. My sister-in-law was on the second floor of Fifth Third bank last year when a gunman shot and killed three people in the lobby below her. Her dear colleague was trapped in a revolving door where she became a sitting duck target for the gunman. It’s a miracle she lived. Of course guns used illegally are not the only ones that are deadly. Hundreds are injured or killed every year in tragic situations where guns are used inappropriately or fired accidentally. There is simply no denying that guns have devastated the lives of thousands of innocent people. In acting on behalf of its citizens, the Ohio state legislature should be doing everything in its power to prevent gun injury and death. Instead, this bill absolves those who wish to carry concealed weapons from the most basic responsibilities associated with that right, thereby increasing the risk of harm to everyone else.

With rights come responsibilities. The right to carry a concealed weapon should not supercede my right (or that of any Ohioan) to feel safe in my own community. Obtaining a permit and receiving training are commonsense requirements that reduce the inherent risk associated with carrying and concealing a deadly weapon. These safeguards do nothing to infringe upon the right to bear arms. It makes no sense to abandon all safety measures and remove any responsibility from individuals who will be carrying loaded guns in public – ones no one can see or protect themselves from for that matter. I respectfully ask that you protect the safety of all Ohioans and vote no on this bill.

