

Chairman Becker and Committee Members:

This is John Vogel, Treasurer of Western Reserve Fish & Game Association in Niles, Ohio. I am addressing the Committee, again, in opposition to HB 178 and the amendments being considered. I would have preferred live testimony, but at the time of your hearing, I will be meeting with ODNR District 3 representatives about funding for our club's continued commitment to quality (free to the public) educational opportunities regarding shooting, fishing and archery sports.

First: AM 133 0476, Requirement to carry liability insurance. In the memorable words of the "Church Lady" of Saturday Night Live Fame. "Isn't that special." HB 178 touts itself as a triumph of the US Constitution's 2nd Amendment. One of the strongest sets of arguments in favor of the legislation included points that criticized the license fees and mandatory training costs under current CHL laws. Costs and privacy were waved vigorously as important flags in the foundation to institute the all problem solving legislation. Mandatory liability places lawful firearms owners at the less than tender mercies of the insurance market.

And, here comes the additional side action; the attachments that define the realities that advocates probably never considered. Mandatory liability insurance, confirmation of coverage by unskilled sellers and undetermined quality of training for law enforcement in the field regarding questions that will ultimately land in the profit columns of tort lawyers hardly seem like steps in the right direction. I doubt the founding fathers dreamt that a caveat would be added about insurance when they codified for the ages our right to bear arms.

Then, there is the feared "universal background checks" that are set in AM 0761. I'm guessing the talking heads on Facebook never anticipated this gem that has been long hoped for by staunch anti firearms proponents would be set as policy in a "Constitutional Carry" bill.

To keep it short, let me not overlook the transportation restrictions outlined in AM 133 0681. This amendment has the smell of targeting urbanized populations who are becoming increasingly dependent on public transportation. Your "constitutional carry" guarantees will be limited by your ability to afford a personal vehicle and a parking place on top of affording marketplace liability insurance.

I am sure that I did not stand alone in my expressed concerns about the dramatic restrictions that could develop as a result of 178. However, even I did not anticipate that the bill would be stringing its own barbed wire around the ability of responsible citizens to carry concealed or, for that fact, to even own firearms affordably.

I must restate my strongest opposition to HB 178. I believe that the proposed amendments present a best reason as to why the bill is a slippery slope and it should be shelved. Ohio has a solid tradition of CHL by responsible gun owners. "If it ain't broke, why fix it."

Respectfully,

John W. Vogel
Treasurer, Western Reserve Fish & Game Association