

June 17, 2019

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

**Re: Opposition to HB178**

Dear Chairman Becker and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristine Woodworth. I am a retired businessperson in the field of marketing research, data analysis and personal history, and a resident of House District 27 in Cincinnati.

I believe that all people, in Ohio, the United States and the world, share a common goal - we all want to be safe, and for our loved ones to be safe. We want to be safe in our coffee shops, our theaters, and our football games. We want to be safe in our schools, our workplaces and on our roads. In fact, in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Safety is second only to Physiological needs such as food, water and sleep. It is deeply human, primal even.

As the elected representatives of Ohio residents, your job is to write and pass legislation that makes life better for Ohioans. Your job is to make us safer. That's why I am concerned about HB178.

Let's start with the assumption that if we eliminate the permit requirement for concealed carry more people will carry hidden guns in more public spaces, including in their cars. That seems to me intuitively obvious, and in fact it would seem to be the **actual point of the bill**, a feature, not a bug. Let's further assume that the vast majority of these people are well-intentioned, law abiding citizens who, despite scientific evidence to the contrary, genuinely believe that carrying a gun makes them and the people around them safer. (The research on this topic by public health experts shows exactly the opposite, but let's leave that aside for the moment.) So now we're not talking about criminals who will commit crimes no matter what the law is. We're talking about regular, everyday people who are, as evidenced by their perceived need to carry a concealed gun, full of fear and suspicion, moving through the world armed with a deadly weapon.

What is the effect on public safety of more people carrying guns, in more places? Just this week, we have seen these headlines in the news:

- **Man killed by officer in Costco was nonverbal, had intellectual disabilities, relative says**<sup>1</sup> – In this shooting, an off-duty LAPD officer shot and killed a non-verbal man with an intellectual disability and wounded the man's parents. In a Costco.
- **He wanted to apologize for cutting off another driver. It turned into a deadly shootout**<sup>2</sup> – A Marine Corp veteran tries to apologize for cutting a driver off. Driver shoots, vet shoots back, both are killed.
- **Arizona man recovering after being shot multiple times at Payson gas station**<sup>3</sup> – A disagreement over gas pumps turns into a shooting.
- **Man wounded after apparent road rage shooting in Aurora**<sup>4</sup>
- **Belleview bar fight ends with woman shot in leg, one arrest**<sup>5</sup>

What do all these instances have in common? They all seem to be cases of an argument or disagreement which, in the absence of a gun, might have been settled with words or even fists. They all are situations where instead of going home with a black eye, a victim does not go home at all.

Eliminating the permit requirement for concealed carry in Ohio would doubtless lead to more concealed guns being carried, and inevitably to more arguments ending in gunshots. It also seems intuitive that more people carrying more guns in more places, sometimes without adequate training will also lead to more mistakes, i.e. unintentional shootings, or guns left in bathrooms, etc. For example:

- **Shot that killed teacher at Ruby Tuesday came from 9mm in her purse, NC cops say** <sup>6</sup> Police said Moore was eating at the restaurant when the 9mm Smith & Wesson gun in her purse fired, hitting her in the stomach.
- **The Prescott's Valley police chief's gun is missing after it was left in a library restroom, according to police.** <sup>7</sup>
- **Capitol Police weapon left unattended in Capitol bathroom, again** <sup>8</sup>

If even trained law enforcement officers sometimes leave their guns behind, why would we expect that untrained civilians would be any less prone to this?

Of course, these are anecdotes, and some might claim isolated incidents. And we've heard a lot in these hearings about how much safer proponents of this bill would "feel" if more people were carrying more guns in more places. However, there is no credible evidence that more guns in more places reduces crime, and in fact much public health research that points to the opposite conclusion.

- A study published in 2017 in the American Journal of Public Health concluded that "Shall-issue laws are associated with significantly higher rates of total, firearm-related, and handgun-related homicide" as compared to May Issue laws.<sup>9</sup>
- The T.H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard has conducted multiple studies that show more guns equals more homicide. To quote *"Using a validated proxy for firearm ownership, we analyzed the relationship between firearm availability and homicide across 50 states over a ten-year period (1988-1997). After controlling for poverty and urbanization, for every age group, people in states with many guns have elevated rates of homicide, particularly firearm homicide."*<sup>10</sup>
  - Further, in an examination of homicide rates of Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) from 1996 to 2010 they found that *"differences in rates of homicides of LEOs across states are best explained not by differences in crime, but by differences in household gun ownership. In high gun states, LEOs are 3 times more likely to be murdered than LEOs working in low-gun states."*<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the evidence is mounting that guns are increasingly being used on our roads, during disagreements:

- "Incidents categorized as road rage — broadly, where someone in a car brandished a gun in a threatening manner or fired a gun at another driver or passenger — have more than doubled in the last three years, from 247 in 2014 to 620 in 2016. All told, there were at least 1,319 road rage episodes involving firearms over that span. Nationwide, at least 354 people were wounded and 136 people were killed."<sup>11</sup>
- In fact, it's possible that the presence of a gun in the car actually increases the likelihood of road rage to begin with. Research has found that **"motorists with guns are more likely to act aggressively and to engage in acts of road rage."**<sup>12</sup>

- In addition, scientific research links **handling a gun to increased levels of testosterone and aggression** in males.<sup>13</sup> It is not hard to make the leap from increased levels of aggression to increased incidence of road rage, bar fights and in fact, shooting an unarmed, disabled man to death in the frozen foods aisle at Costco.

In conclusion:

- Carrying concealed weapons in public creates unnecessary risks of intentional, heat of the moment or accidental shootings.
- Members of the public who carry guns risk escalating everyday disagreements into public shootouts, especially in places where disputes frequently occur, such as in bars or in traffic.
- Eliminating the requirement that concealed carriers obtain a permit and undergo training would put more guns in more places in the hands of more people with less training and less knowledge of the laws governing legal carrying and use of weapons.

This is an unnecessary and egregious bill, that does nothing to make us safer, or to solve any problem being experienced by gun owners in Ohio. It is a law that Ohioans do not want or need. I urge you to vote against this dangerous relaxation of common sense gun laws. Please vote NO on HB178.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/17/costco-shooting-man-killed-officer-nonverbal-cousin-says/1475170001/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/davie/fl-ne-davie-double-fatal-shooting-20190612-4p4hwwetynbe7gedkkpplxuism-story.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.abc15.com/news/region-northern-az/payson/arizona-man-recovering-after-being-shot-multiple-times-at-payson-gas-station?fbclid=IwAR3rjL3vUW67ybYysWmDAz3AvsxbhR4ISleFDVuw2q2UjTtyLe4As0AnMsU>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/crime/man-wounded-after-apparent-road-rage-shooting-in-aurora>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ocala.com/news/20190615/bellevue-bar-fight-ends-with-woman-shot-in-leg-one-arrest>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.newsobserver.com/news/state/north-carolina/article231439203.html?fbclid=IwAR1kzdeKoxTYpgEyn-wW-t\\_s5UI4VYnEv3Wp4VScHvjYUwhkzqnc\\_qV6oHI](https://www.newsobserver.com/news/state/north-carolina/article231439203.html?fbclid=IwAR1kzdeKoxTYpgEyn-wW-t_s5UI4VYnEv3Wp4VScHvjYUwhkzqnc_qV6oHI)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvZWd-9Px7o>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rollcall.com/news/congress/dangerous-deja-vu-capitol-police-weapon-left-unattended-capitol-bathroom>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304057>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thetrace.org/2017/04/road-rage-shootings-guns/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/youth-and-guns/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6919042\\_Guns\\_Testosterone\\_and\\_Aggression\\_An\\_Experimental\\_Test\\_of\\_a\\_Mediational\\_Hypothesis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6919042_Guns_Testosterone_and_Aggression_An_Experimental_Test_of_a_Mediational_Hypothesis)