

Chairman Becker, Vice-Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller and members of the House Federalism Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 178.

My name is Dr. Pamela Warrick. I am a psychologist from Westerville, OH. I currently work in the schools and have worked in hospital, private practice and academia. I am also a mother and a very concerned citizen. I currently have a gun in my home and I come from a family of gun owners. I support the Second Amendment and an individual's right to responsible gun ownership. However, we have a gun violence crisis in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), gun homicides kill about 13,000 people every year in the United States

According to a 2016 study the *American Journal of Medicine*, that makes America's gun homicide rate 25 times higher than the average of other global economic leaders. While the U.S. accounts for 46% of the population of these countries, it has 82% of the gun deaths overall.

HB 178 will allow people to carry concealed guns in public without permit or safety training. This legislation would allow people with no safety training and certain criminal backgrounds to legally carry in crowded town centers and on city streets. States that pass permit-less carry see a substantial increase in gun violence. This dangerous legislation ignores the 88 percent of Americans who support requiring safety training and a clean criminal record in order to carry a concealed handgun in public.

One of the central questions in the debate about how to reduce gun violence is whether laws that make it easier to carry a concealed handgun lead to more or fewer homicides. One side says: The more guns out there, the safer we are, because they deter crime. The other side says: The more guns out there, the less safe we are.

We now have the results of the most comprehensive study to date from researchers at Boston University School of Public Health comparing homicide rates in states with more versus less restrictive conceal carry laws over a 25 year period (1991 to 2015).

This research compared homicide rates in States with "shall-issue" laws (concealed carry permits issued if requisite criteria are met) versus "may-issue" laws (giving law enforcement officials wide discretion over whether to issue concealed carry permits). Permit-less carry states could not be included due to the limited amount of available data.

- The study found that handgun homicide rates in these less restrictive "shall issue" states were 10.6 percent higher than homicide rates in more restrictive "may issue" states.
- This study found that States that make it tougher to carry a concealed weapon have lower rates of handgun homicides.

The conclusions of the study are as follows:

...The trend toward increasingly permissive concealed-carry laws is inconsistent with public opinion, which tends to oppose the carrying of guns in public. Our findings suggest that these laws may also be inconsistent with the promotion of public safety."

Dr. Michael Siegel, lead author of this study, stated in an interview "I think what this study suggests is that this trend toward increasingly lenient concealed carry laws is actually having an adverse impact on the public's health because it's increasing the risk of homicide," said.

Data from States that have passed permit-less carry legislation support these conclusions. For example, Alaska, Arizona and Missouri have had a significant increase the rate of aggravated assaults since enacting permit-less carry.

As I have previously stated, I support the Second Amendment and an individual's right to responsible gun ownership. However, there are limits to all of our Constitutional freedoms.

For example, even though the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the rights of Americans to express themselves, there are limits on this freedom.

Freedom of speech does not permit someone to make a false statement about another person that could damage his or her reputation. Americans are not free to make false statements that could cause panic or place others in danger.

In 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that obscenity is not protected if the average person would find the speech or expression obscene and if it cannot be considered art, it is not protected by the Constitution.

We are fortunate to live in a place where we are free to express ourselves, within limits. These limitations do not take away from the meaning of the First Amendment. The right to free speech is a fundamental American right.

Just as there are limits to our Constitutional right to freedom of speech there must also be reasonable limits to our Second Amendment rights in the interest of public safety.

There is nothing unreasonable about requiring a person carrying a concealed weapon to inform a police officer if stopped for a traffic violation. There is nothing unreasonable about requiring a person who wishes to carry a concealed handgun to secure a permit and to have a training course on the use of a deadly weapon. In fact, the NRA Explore Website states: "Safety is not only critical in handling firearms but in everyday life. The NRA offers resources and training to ensure the safe and effective use of firearms as well as personal safety. Training courses are available that teach proactive strategies to avoid dangerous situations, self-defense using a firearm, as well as protection inside and outside the home. "

Owning a firearm is a huge responsibility. Things can go wrong very quickly if a person isn't careful with the operation and safety features of a gun. Proper firearms training taught by a certified instructor is something that every responsible gun owner should undergo. Several of the benefits to this type of training include:

- Increased Accuracy  
Learning how to aim and shoot your firearm is extremely important, especially if you are carrying a concealed weapon in public.
- Safety Knowledge

Everyone can make mistakes, and mistakes with a gun are often deadly – learning proper firearm safety techniques are imperative.

- Using Your Head  
Remaining calm and collected in a life-threatening situation or other dangerous event can be extremely challenging and firearm instructors can provide life-saving guidelines.

Permit-less carry dramatically lowers the bar for who can carry a concealed handgun in public - allowing both individuals with dangerous histories and no safety training to carry a concealed weapon in public. I urge this committee to carefully consider your responsibility to protect the public and vote NO on HB 178.