

**Testimony on House Bill 178**  
**House Federalism Committee**  
**Rep. John Becker, Chair**  
**Rep. Reggie Stoltzfus, Vice Chair**  
**Rep, Adam C. Miller, Ranking Member**

Submitted By:

Amanda Barron

Chair Becker, Vice Chair Reggie Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to House Bill 178. My name is Amanda Barron; I am a concerned citizen as well as mother of a pre-school aged child. After the most dangerous provisions to the “Stand Your Ground” bill were removed in the last legislative session, I felt relieved and hopeful that gun safety was being better understood by legislators. I thought Ohio was heading in a direction of true understanding of just how deadly firearms are and that the laws in our state are not strong enough to ensure people are safe to go to the grocery store, walk down the street in the evening, or send our children to school/daycare without hesitation.

Unfortunately, after hearing the introduction of House Bill 178 it became evident that legislators do not see the big picture here, the cost, and the devastation that gun violence brings. HB 178 (Permitless Carry) allows anyone to carry a hidden, loaded firearm without a background check, permit, or training. There are no requirements to tell law enforcement that you’re in possession of a gun. I truly cannot find a single shred of logic in what House Bill 178 stands for. I do not understand the purpose of creating more lax rules around a weapon that is known to be deadly. Thirty states give law enforcement the authority to deny a permit to people who pose a danger to the community. Permitless carry would strip law enforcement of this authority and force them to allow people with recent violent criminal histories to carry concealed guns throughout the state.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 178 takes away a level of safety for law enforcement that is both unnecessary and irresponsible. Not only that, but permitless carry bills lower the bar for who may carry hidden handguns in public—letting violent criminals and people with no safety training to legally carry in crowded town centers and on city streets. As many others have testified to this committee, states that pass permitless 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.

When mentioning how dangerous House Bill 178 is and how it could give criminals easier access to firearms the common response, is "criminals don't obey the laws anyway." With House Bill 178

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<sup>1</sup> AL, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, KS, LA, ME, MD, MA, MN, MO, NJ, NY, ND, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VA, WY

situations could easily turn a non-criminal into a criminal, due to them carrying a gun into a public place without any safety training or knowing the laws. An ordinary law-abiding citizen could find themselves in a situation where their gun goes off unexpectedly injuring themselves or others. Lack of knowledge with what can be considered a dangerous weapon, is irresponsible and creates potential for safety concerns across the state.

House Bill 178 has me feeling unsettled and asking the question “how we can continue to raise our children, send them off to school/daycare every day and trust they will be coming home to us each night?” My son is in pre-school, he is four years old and the thought of sending him off to kindergarten leaves my anxious, bewildered and angry. In most Ohio schools a test is required for children to be enrolled in kindergarten. Where is the test to ensure my child is safe to go to school every day and attend kindergarten?

I want to be very clear, I am not opposed to guns; I do not have issue with the ownership of guns. My husband owns and shoots guns, in a controlled and safe environment. My opposition to this bill is due to people not feeling safe, worrying about the safety of their children and their loved ones, especially those who are in law enforcement, because of proposed irresponsible changes to gun laws such as HB 178. My opposition is to this bill’s elimination of checks and balances to ensure the safety of all people. The right to bear arms can and should be regulated just like every other right guaranteed in the constitution—you can’t yell “fire” in a crowded theater, and you have to register to vote. With 80-90 percent of Americans supporting requiring safety training and a clean criminal record in order to carry a concealed handgun in public, I am clearly not the only one who feels this way.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns with the committee.