

Chairman Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Federalism Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Amy Mercer and I am a resident of Mason, Ohio. I am a consultant, community volunteer, wife and mother to three children who attend our wonderful public schools in Mason. And I am strongly opposed to HB178.

I oppose this bill because I do not feel comfortable raising my children in communities where individuals can carry deadly weapons without any training. Requiring a permit for a gun would ensure that individuals who desire to carry a weapon are trained to do so without bringing harm or death to my family. I believe that obtaining a permit requires necessary training to potential gun owners that is just as critical to public safety as a driver's license. I welcome the testing, driver's training, and practice hours that are required for my children to obtain a license to operate a vehicle because I believe it will keep them safe when they drive. Similarly, I welcome the gun safety training that is required for potential gun owners because, like cars, guns can be deadly if not properly operated.

I also oppose HB178 because I believe that law enforcement should be able to ask suspected criminals if they are carrying a gun. We experienced a situation in Mason City Schools in 2017 that was directly related to this issue. The students were having an assembly in the fieldhouse their school shares with the local community center. Police officers were on hand in the community center due to the circumstances of having so many students in one place that is accessible to the greater public. Police noticed a suspicious person milling around in the area of the fieldhouse and when questioned, found he was carrying a gun with intentions of harming the students. Also through questioning, they learned he had a warrant for his arrest and apprehended him before he could kill anyone. If the police officers were not able to do their job and follow through on their instincts, children could have been killed in their school that day. My child was at that assembly and could have been killed. Police should be able to question potential criminal about whether they are carrying a gun and whether they have a legal permit to do use it.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Amy Mercer