

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing you as an educator with 22 years of experience and a concerned citizen of Ohio. I would like to express to you why I am opposed to HB178, the permitless carry bill in Ohio.

I believe in education and training. The more my students know about a skill, whether it be in math or reading or writing, the better they are at it. As they learn and practice they become more accurate in their calculations and in their decoding of the written word. This is true of any skill really. You want to be better at football? Learn the important skills and practice. You want to be a better writer? Learn the important skills and practice. You want to be a better seamstress? Learn the important skills and practice.

I, for one, want gun owners who have learned and practiced the important safety skills that are particular to guns. More importantly, I want the people who want to carry and conceal a loaded gun to be the kind of people who want to make sure they know and have practiced those skills in order to be a safe, accurate, and responsible gun owner. What does it say about a person who wants to carry a concealed, loaded gun, but doesn't feel like he or she can't spare a few hours to learn how to be safe doing it?

I am not alone in this opinion. Not even close to alone. According to a survey 88 percent of Americans agree with me, and with good reason. While the vast majority of gun owners are responsible and safe with their weapons, there are many examples of those who are not. Last month a gun owner, who happened to be a teacher, killed herself inside a Ruby Tuesday restaurant when the gun in her purse accidentally fired. Last May another gun in the purse of a woman went off in a grocery store checkout line in Florida and her husband was wounded. In April 2018 a man left a loaded gun in the public restroom of a fishing pier in Florida. A good friend of mine was shopping at his grocery store and a gun slipped out of the waistband of a man at the deli counter and slid across the floor 20 feet to where he was standing. There are many, many examples of gun owners not knowing enough, not practicing enough, not treating their weapon with the respect it deserves. Why would we want to take away the permitting process, education and training that is in place now? As I am sure you are aware, there are statistics from other states like Arizona, Missouri, and Alaska who have seen substantial increases in gun violence since they passed their permitless carry legislation. (If you are not aware, check the Arizona Department of Public Safety Reports and the Crime Comparison Reports from the Metropolitan Police Department of St. Louis.)

This legislation is a solution in search of a problem. The people of Ohio don't want this legislation. The people of Ohio don't deserve what this legislation will create.

Thank you.

Susanne Lane

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