

Chairman John Becker
House Federalism Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Chad D. Baus, President
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Chairman Becker and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for HB 425 and to urge its passage.

I am an NRA-certified firearms instructor with 16 years experience teaching concealed carry classes in Ohio. Of all the rules and regulations the State of Ohio has placed upon its citizens who wish to exercise their Constitutional right to keep and bear arms for their defense and security (Art. I, § 4), the requirement that license-holders inform law enforcement officers that they are carrying is one of the most troublesome for license-holders AND, I believe, for the officers who are interacting with them.

I wish I had a dollar for every time I've been asked to explain what the word "promptly" means when instructing students on their legal obligation to "promptly" notify. Students don't know how to interpret that word, and there have been many instances of officers applying the law in various ways, which proves law enforcement officers don't know what "promptly" means either.

Is it five seconds? Ten seconds? One minute? Two minutes? Should I interrupt the law enforcement officer as they explain why I was stopped in order to "promptly" notify? What if I'm not carrying? What if I'm in the very back of a three-row vehicle with a bunch of co-workers and the driver is pulled over? Must I notify then? What if I am witness to a crime or automobile accident - must I notify responding officers? What if I'm asked to stay around and provide a statement? What if there is more than one officer present - must I notify them all individually? What if one comes immediately, one comes five minutes later, and one comes five minutes after that? Must I notify them all?

Let me give you a real-life example that reinforces this concern. Several years ago I was witness to an automobile accident, and stopped to provide first aid. When a law enforcement officer arrived, I advised him that I was carrying. Then another arrived, so I told them. Another arrived, and I told them as well - all while trying to administer first aid.

After emergency medical personnel arrived and I was able to cease giving first aid, one of the officers asked me if I was witness to the collision, and then asked me to stay to give a report. If there was any gray area before, I knew for certain at that point that I was being detained for a law enforcement purpose, so I notified again, because I could not remember if I had told this officer or not. I was just trying to comply with the law.

As an instructor, I teach my students how to properly notify an officer when they are being detained for a law enforcement purpose. Despite my various methods of teaching this to them - including explanations, demonstration and even role-playing - my former students tell me that one of the challenges that comes into play is the stress level that they experience during a traffic stop, motor vehicle crash, being witness to a crime, etc. In these situations, remembering to notify a responding officer that that they are carrying is just not the forefront of their minds.

When you accept opponent testimony, I am certain that one or more law enforcement bureaucrats will testify that their officers need this law in order to do their jobs. I would like to suggest that you ask them why their counterparts in neighboring states such as Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia can do their jobs without this requirement. Perhaps they would benefit from having our neighboring states' law enforcement come and give them instruction on how to properly train our officers.

Ohio officers and citizens are every bit as capable as those in Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia of having safe encounters without a mandatory notification provision in the law. As such, it is past time we remove this poorly-defined infraction, which can be used to entrap an otherwise legal concealed handgun licensee who has no criminal intent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chad D. Baus". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chad D. Baus

President

Northwest Self Defense LLC