



**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 338
November 19, 2019
House Health Committee**

Chairman Lipps and members of the House Health Committee, I am Joe Mazzola, Health Commissioner of Franklin County Public Health and President-Elect of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners. I am pleased to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 338.

Ohio's 112 Local Health Districts (LHDs) are charged with the primary responsibility of preventing illness and injury, promoting a sustainable public health infrastructure, and protecting the health and well-being of their respective communities. To support these foundational public health services, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) provides leadership and advocacy efforts on behalf of, and in conjunction with LHDs. Regarding injury prevention, AOHC recognizes that firearm-related violence is a national public health issue. As such, the core public health functions of assessment, policy development and assurance should be used to reduce the burden and impact of firearm-related injury and death.

HB 338, like any legislation, will not prevent all instances of gun violence (including self-harm, mass shootings and domestic violence), but to the extent the bill's provisions can provide a way to hit pause, release a pressure valve and intervene in a crisis, or better yet before a crisis hits, it will be worth our while to explore all legal means to do so.

The bill's focus on mental health diagnosis and domestic violence cases allows for a concentrated effort on cases that can lead to a decrease in fatalities in these very specific instances. The bill's focus on a mental health diagnosis can help with people considering suicide and may be able to reduce the deaths from suicide in the state. Also, in many cases of domestic violence, intervention to avoid the use of a firearm can result in avoidance of the use of deadly force.

We ask for your favorable consideration of House Bill 338, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.