

Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Federalism & Interstate Relations Committee. My name is Chris Cooney and I am in favor of HB 142.

The requirement to identify sounds like a good idea, sounds reasonable at first blush – people with guns telling a police officer they are armed. But is it really a valid idea? Does it contribute to the safety of officers?

Consider the scope of the current law, exactly who does it affect? The requirement only applies to those with a CCW license. They are the sole group that the law has any effect on. People carrying illegally without a license are not affected by the law. Criminals are not subject to the requirements, a felon with a gun is not required to do anything by this law.

Only CCW license holders must tell an officer they are licensed and armed. A group who all have had extensive background checks run, are not criminals. They are not the most likely source of a threat to a police officer, perhaps the least likely. But they alone are required to tell an officer they are armed.

Add to this all that if a person is armed and does intend to harm an officer, they are very unlikely to say they are armed, law or not. It is interesting to note that whilst some officers I have informed seem to panic a tad, most actually relax when I tell them I have a license and am armed. It takes me from an unknown to someone who is likely not a threat or I wouldn't be saying a word. The intent of the law is to warn an officer of a potential threat – it doesn't do this.

Please note that this is an area of law where many states have taken different approaches. Some have this requirement to identify, some don't. We can use our imaginations and try to envision what the results would be – or we can just look at other states and see what really happens. There are no horror stories from states that don't.

I don't think I've ever submitted testimony before. Firearm rights is a real issue that actually affects my life. I don't always pay that much attention to actions of my Ohio representatives, but I will be (as will many) following the progress of HB142 and I hope to see all of you support it.

Yours truly,

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