



Ohio Gun Owners

Chris Dorr, Director

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 201
May 23, 2017

Madam Chair Roegner, Vice Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Leland, and Members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee,

I'm Chris Dorr from Ohio Gun Owners, and thank you madam chair for scheduling this proponent testimony hearing and the opportunity to testify in front of you today in favor of H.B. 201, Rep. Hood's Constitutional Carry bill that our organization is mobilizing on behalf of.

H.B. 201, at its core, is the simple idea that if you're legal to own a firearm, you should be able to carry it for any lawful purpose with no additional permits, fees, government mandated training, or bureaucratic paperwork required.

The right to keep and bear arms is a God-given, natural right enshrined in our Constitution, not a right bestowed on citizens by government or legislature.

House Bill 201 makes the current Ohio permit system optional so that everyday lawful Ohioans can continue obtaining a permit, if they choose to do so, for reciprocity purposes - so they can carry in states that have entered into a reciprocity agreement with the state of Ohio.

When considering this bill or the very idea of Constitutional Carry, it is important to keep in mind

current Ohio law: it is legal right now to carry a firearm openly, with no training, no taxes or fees or and with no government permission required.

And this system seem to work out well: we don't have a problem here in Ohio with accidental shooting of bystanders during self-defense situations nor do we have a problem with vigilante justice being meted out at the hands of these "open carriers."

Also, House Bill 201 leaves unchanged the current disqualifiers on owning firearms at the Federal and State level - in other words, Constitutional Carry would not allow criminals any ability to own or carry firearms while committing criminal acts.

Some will naively say that by making the permit process - and the accompanying background checks - optional, that we're going to see an uptick in crime. But that's just not the case.

As a reminder, some of the worst killing sprees in recent memory were committed by people who passed their background checks.

The Charleston church shooter murdered 9 people after passing his background check.

The Aurora, Colorado killer in 2012 murdered 12 innocent citizens after passing a background check.

The Virginia Naval Yard murderer killed 13 people in 2013 after a background check.

Again, as Representative Hood testified, the Ft. Hood shootings, the Virginia Tech shooting, the criminal who attempted to murder Gabby Giffords - all cases where thugs passed background checks before their crimes of violence.

The point is, criminals willing to commit crimes of violence are not deterred by laws preventing them from procuring weapons to carry out their crimes!

If they can't buy a gun legally, they'll just go borrow one from one of their thug friends! Or they'll steal one! Or, they'll strap on a knife, jump in their vehicle and drive to the nearest University and start mowing down students.

In other words, criminals don't obey the laws: hence the term "criminal."

Instead, what these barriers do is make it harder for law-abiding citizens to possess and carry firearms for self-defense against the criminals who disregard the law anyway.

The great news is, Constitutional Carry is gaining popularity across the country. Just this year, it's passed in both North Dakota and New Hampshire.

Last year, it not only passed in Republican-controlled states like Mississippi and Idaho, but it passed into law in both Missouri and neighboring West Virginia as well -- even with Democrat Governors.

In fact, under President Barack Obama America went from two to eleven Constitutional Carry states, and today thirteen states have restored this right to their citizens, with over a dozen more currently considering it.

And despite the hand-wringing of nanny-staters like Michael Bloomberg and his front-groups like Moms Demand Some Action, states with Constitutional Carry aren't hotbeds of Old West shootouts or vigilante justice.

That's because career criminals know that running into a potential victim who is armed is a recipe for early retirement.

In fact, in the state of Vermont, which has never regulated the carrying of firearms for self-defense, according to the FBI's annual crime report consistently has some of the lowest, if not THE lowest, violent crime rates per capita in the country.

Again, no vigilante justice. No accidental shootings. No blood in the streets.

It only makes sense.

The more guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the safer our communities are.

In fact, the city of Kennesaw, GA (a suburb of Atlanta) in 1982 passed a law requiring heads of households to keep at least one firearm in the house. The residential burglary rate subsequently dropped 89% in Kennesaw, compared to the modest 10.4% drop in Georgia as a whole.

Ten years later (1991), the residential burglary rate in Kennesaw was still 72% lower than it had been in 1981, before the law was passed!

In Orlando in 1966 and 1967, the media highly publicized a safety course which taught Orlando women how to use guns.

The result: Orlando's rape rate dropped 88% in 1967, whereas the rape rate remained constant in the rest of Florida and the nation.

Criminals get the message. Quickly.

And America doesn't have a problem with law abiding gun owners having firearms.

Law abiding gun owners are America's best citizens when it comes to not committing crimes, better than any other class of American citizens, bar none.

In fact, a study using data compiled from 1987-2015 in Texas and Florida showed "that permit holders are convicted of misdemeanors and felonies at less than a sixth the rate for police officers."

"Among police, firearms violations occur at a rate of 16.5 per 100,000 officers. Among permit holders in Florida and Texas, the rate is only 2.4 per 100,000. That is just one-seventh of the rate for police officers."

You see, this bill is fantastic for public safety and very bad for violent criminals.

The other major deficiency in current Ohio law that House Bill 201 addresses is removing Ohio's duty to notify law enforcement that a concealed carrier is carrying a firearm.

As this body saw during testimony on House Bill 148, Ohio has had cases where otherwise law-abiding citizens were charged for not notifying an officer quickly enough that they were exercising their 2nd Amendment rights.

This duty to notify creates needless friction, because the fact still remains that a criminal willing to commit a crime of violence, laughs at and will ignore the duty to notify anyway.

In fact, we had a police officer recently relay to us that the current "duty to notify" may even put officers at more of a risk because a failure to do so at the scene of an officer response may lower the guard of the responding officer.

Again, as stated before, law-abiding citizens exercising their 2nd Amendment rights are some of the finest citizens in the state of Ohio. They respect the rule of law and they respect our excellent law-enforcement community.

It's my belief that it is time for Ohio to take what is clearly the next step in defending the 2nd Amendment at the state level by enacting Constitutional Carry legislation.

Those are my comments, and I would happily entertain any questions you may have.