

Testimony
of
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Chairwoman Roegner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to publicly address House Bill 201.

My name is D.J. Parten, and I am the Southeast Regional Director for the National Association for Gun Rights, a member supported organization with over 27,000 members and supporters in the State of Ohio.

Today, the committee will hear comments on House Bill 201, a bill that is commonly referred to as Constitutional Carry in many states around the country.

On behalf of the National Association for Gun Rights and our members in Ohio, I speak in full support of House Bill 201 and I am also here to deliver over 12,000 petitions in support of this legislation from our members across the state.

We urge the passage of this very important piece of legislation without amendments. At the heart of House Bill 201 is the idea that our Second Amendment rights, and our right to self-defense, should not be subject to the whims of the state.

The concept of House Bill 201 and other Constitutional Carry bills like it is quite simple.

Constitutional Carry laws recognize the right of every law-abiding citizen to carry a firearm, openly or concealed, on their person without having to receive government permission in the form of a mandatory state issued permit.

Unlicensed open carry is already legal in Ohio, and House Bill 201 will simply bring continuity to Ohio's open carry and concealed carry laws.

By rendering the concealed carry permit optional within the state of Ohio, this state will be joining the likes of Arizona, Alaska, Wyoming, West Virginia, Kansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Idaho, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and most recently, North Dakota.

The number of Constitutional Carry states continues to grow, and Ohio will be joining 12 other states which have some of the lowest crime rates in the nation if House Bill 201 is passed into law.

Critics of Constitutional Carry often argue that “wild west” shootouts will spill out into the streets, simply because the concealed carry permit is rendered optional.

Yet there is no evidence for this, in fact, all evidence points in the opposite direction of this outrageous claim.

According to FBI Crime Statistics, states which have passed Constitutional Carry into law have both lower violent crime rates and lower murder rates by firearm than non-Constitutional Carry states.

Law-abiding who are allowed to carry the firearm openly or concealed, without government intrusion, reduce crime.

Plain and simple.

And if Ohio passes Constitutional Carry it will also be recognizing another fundamental truth: the choice to wear a shirt or coat, while in public, over your legally owned firearm should not require government fees and licensing.

However, licenses will still be available for reciprocity purposes.

House Bill 201 is a very simple bill.

It does not allow anyone to carry a weapon if they cannot already legally possess one. Criminals will not suddenly be able to legally carry a gun.

This bill does nothing more than restore law-abiding gun owners’ ability to carry a lawfully possessed gun on their person, while in public, without having to pay a government fee to do so.

With full support from our members in Ohio, I urge you to vote yes on House Bill

201 without any amendments.

Thank you.