



PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS.

To: House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations

From: Steve Ritchey, Board Member, Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

Re: HB 233, House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations Hearing, July 5, 2017

Date: July 5, 2017

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Leland and members of the Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations: Thank you for the opportunity to share opponent testimony with you on HB 233.

We are all here because we care about our communities, and want to make sure that the public policies in Ohio do the best job possible of serving the citizens of this state *with safety and wellbeing*.

HB 233 would legally sanction the violation of our weapons free zones in the State of Ohio. *Is this wise?*

Some proponents of this bill say it is merely intended to prevent otherwise law-abiding concealed carry holders from facing criminal charges for “forgetting” they have a concealed weapon on them and then violating a weapons-free zone. Some of them have even admitted that they have forgotten they were carrying and entered a weapons-free zone. What they have failed to demonstrate is an actual case where someone simply “forgot” and then has been charged, prosecuted, and convicted. And even if we accept this unproven premise that this prosecution happens all the time to well-intended people, it is the duty and responsibility for those afforded special privileges under Ohio law to carry guns in our public spaces, to remember *when* they have a hidden, loaded weapon on their person. A concealed handgun is designed to be a deadly weapon.

Please consider: gun owners have actually admitted that this bill is designed to let concealed handgun licensees carry in prohibited places, where Ohio law protects the decision of the property owner to prohibit guns. The ability of policymakers to allow concealed firearms in these public spaces already does exist under Ohio law. If *property owners/managers* have areas designated gun-free, it is because they have made a decision to exercise the right to stay that way. This committee and *all legislators* should not seek to override those deliberate decisions and the rights of these property owners/managers to keep their properties as weapons-free zones.

In fact, This bill places an unfair burden on property owners to becoming the regulators of guns on their premises. When you see a gun where it's NOT *WANTED*, the thought that goes through your head is how you are going to SURVIVE the situation (*if the gun is made visible*). *It is a grave infringement on the rights of the people at the business or organization. Placing the burden of law enforcement regarding deadly weapons on employees of the businesses, schools, churches, day care centers, institutes of higher education, health care centers, and government buildings that would be impacted by this legislation is plain unjust. It opens the door for weapons to be present where those who own and manage have clearly said no and puts all, including law enforcement, at grave risk.*

What this bill is really attempting is to do away with all of the weapons-free zones in the state of Ohio. It's as simple as that. We urge this committee to oppose *this dangerous* bill: HB233. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.