

Testimony before the
The House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations
The Honorable Kristina D. Roegner, Chair
By Rosie Craig
Wednesday, July 5, 2017

Since the passage of CCW in 2004, concealed weapons legislation has been amended and continually weakened to a shameful degree, such that our CCW laws are merely means for those people who love their guns to be allowed to carry their guns nearly every where, and then to be immune from punitive measures should a gun carrier make a mistake or act inappropriately.

The promotion of gun carrying rights, both concealed and open carry, has brought to Ohio a Face Book killer who kills a man and replays the video on social media for the world to see. CCW legislation brought us protests by open carry supporters during the Republican Nation Convention - a world spectacle - where even our governor could not send the armed protestors home; all because of an expanded CCW privilege granted to them by the Ohio General Assembly in 2006, after the Assembly took away the rights of cities to regulate firearms in their parks and on their public streets. Ironically, the 2006 preemption of municipal police powers was promoted as a way to make laws more uniform and easier for gun owners to follow. Yet this governing body has repeatedly amended the CCW statute to make the law harder to understand - not easier.

This past March, a member of this legislative body, who was also a CCW licensee, endangered the public, was charged and convicted after mixing the potentially lethal combination of alcohol abuse, a loaded weapon and a motor vehicle.

As I sat through hearings in 2002 and 2003, sponsors hashed out the details of proposed CCW legislation that originally would have allowed a CCW licensee to carry firearms in the Ohio State House. Mere weeks before passage of the 2004 CCW legislation in January of 2004, the bill's sponsors withdrew this provision. The rationale was that the presence of the Ohio Highway Patrol in the Ohio State House made it unnecessary.

This is the hypocrisy of this governing body which has, against the will of many, given us more "gun welcome" zones. If the self-defense argument was anything but a ruse, we ought to have enough CCW permit holders amongst our legislators and staff to adequately protect us here in the State house so that our Highway Patrol officers might be made available to protect other vulnerable parts of the state! Am I serious? Of course not! Yet legislators here will undoubtedly provide rational and anecdotal evidence that Ohio CCW laws have made us safer. Then I would challenge your confidence in this matter by opening up our licensing system to systematic audit. In just the past three year's time 4,300 CCW licenses have been suspended and 1,600 revoked. I'd like to know why these people have had their licenses revoked or suspended. In particular, I'd like to know if the suspensions and revocations are gun related!

Guns for self defense are not safety devices like seat belts and bicycle helmets, which are designed to save lives while doing no harm.

The bills this committee will hear today that need to be opposed are:

HB 142, the "Surprise Gun Bill", would eliminate the duty of concealed carry licensees to inform law enforcement they have a hidden, loaded weapon when stopped. Police already know that every traffic stop has the potential for a lethal encounter. The bad actions of a few law

enforcement officers, who have since been terminated from their jobs, does not not take away from the added-value safety of the current law.

HB 233, the "Get Out of Jail Free" bill, would remove the penalty for concealed carry licensees that violate our weapons free zones -- so long as they leave if they are caught! This change in the law would reinforce the notion that people who like their guns, who want to carry their guns, should be able to do so with impunity for mistaken or careless actions. This bill would hardly be reassuring for a parent embroiled in an abusive custody battle whose estranged spouse shows up at their child's school with a firearm.

HB 201, "Permitless Carry," would allow anyone to carry a hidden, loaded handgun in our public spaces, with no license, no training and no background check. I attended hearings in the state house in 2002 and 2003, where legislators reassuringly testified to the worthiness of 12 hours of training for CCW licensees, and that such training was a good and necessary requirement. After reducing the training requirement hours to 8 hours, we now seem to be in a race to the bottom to get rid of training requirements all together. AND AS WELL - GET RID OF BACKGROUND CHECKS! Absurd and shameful and dangerous! As having been stated earlier, 5900 CCW licensees had licenses suspended or revoked between 2014 and 2016. This law would make Ohioans less safe by encouraging and allowing people who should never do so to carry a loaded firearm.
