Dear Chairman Coley and Members of the Committee,

Hello, thank you for your time this evening. Just as a brief introduction, my name is Noah Spaulding-Schecter and I am a passionate political activist in the State of Ohio. Currently I am the Expansion Director for the State of Ohio for the High School Democrats of America, the Expansion Director for the Junior Statesmen Foundation in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, and Tennessee, and the founder and lead organizer for two different state-based lobbying organizations.

I am here with you this evening because of my concerns regarding HB 228. As a member of Ohio’s community, I have taken it upon myself to fully understand the implications of this legislation, and I believe that its inherent qualities are not as effective as intended and induce greater harm than often foreseen. I am ultimately here to share why I oppose HB 228 and the abundant diminution of public safety that it promotes.

In principle, HB 228 promotes Stand-Your-Ground-Type legislation that ultimately removes safeguards that could deter illegal and/or irresponsible possession of concealed handguns, and as a member of this community, that thought frightens me to the core. While I understand the appeal of the basic premise, providing citizens the right to defend themselves, the principles in this bill move beyond basic rights of defense, and towards a sense of vigilantism in modern society.

It is relatively agreeable that owning a concealed handgun without a permit is a criminal offense that should be avoided at all costs, and by implementing HB 228, the penalty is reduced to a mere $150 fine. As a community and as a country, we want to reduce unjustified crime and homicide and therefore should maintain restrictions and augment punishment for those who disobey the law. This legislation directly undermines these ideas.

Per the clauses of the bill, HB 228 would mitigate traditional self-defense law and encourage killing of supposed criminals in public, despite clear and safe alternatives. America is built on the principle of the right to a fair trial; however, by giving the power of an irreversible sentence to the everyday citizen, virtually encouraging it, HB 228 subverts this principle. In fact, many citizens have been given more legal authority to kill than the United States military at war.

I have always been a contributor to my community, often in the form of contributing my voice, and I vehemently oppose the implementation of HB 228 due to the consequences that I believe are being ignored in order to institute a more basic, and idealistic, premise. I thank you for your time and urge you to consider my words today because like every member of our community, my voice matters.