



Written Testimony to the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee

Bill Faith, Executive Director

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House Bill 228 (Interested Party)

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, and Ranking Member Schiavoni, I appreciate the opportunity to express concern about a provision in HB 228 that, left unchanged, would jeopardize the safety of residents and employees in certain housing developments.

HB 228, as passed by the Ohio House, bars owners and operators of "subsidized residential premises" from restricting the lawful "ownership, use, or possession of a firearm, a firearm component, or ammunition within the tenant's rental dwelling unit" (*R.C. 5321.01(P) and 5321.13(G)(1)*).

The definition "subsidized residential premises" includes several different types of special housing situations, and its inclusion in this bill has caused alarm among certain housing providers. **This provision prohibits reasonable restrictions on tenants having and even using guns inside residential facilities that serve people with severe and persistent mental illness and/or cognitive disabilities.**

For example, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is designed for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities who are unable to remain housed without intensive services. PSH is intended to be a safe housing environment not only for the provider, but especially for the tenants who live there. The language in SB 228 amending Chapter 5321, Landlord and Tenant Law, undermines the ability to provide a safe and secure environment in these facilities.

COHHIO neither owns nor manages any PSH properties, but we have long supported the development of supportive housing because it has proven highly effective in stabilizing Ohioans who have experienced years of homelessness and debilitating disabilities. Because PSH specifically serves a population that would otherwise likely remain homeless, it is a key element in our efforts to end homelessness in Ohio.

We are also concerned that HB 228 would preclude reasonable firearm restrictions in affordable senior housing developments. This provision would prevent subsidized housing providers from requiring residents to keep their guns safely locked in their residential units. These are sensible policies in facilities that serve residents with Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia, and are designed to respect tenants' rights to legal gun ownership and possession, while keeping these communities as safe as possible.

It is wise to take reasonable precautions concerning the availability of firearms to people with serious mental and cognitive impairments who may be at risk of harming

themselves or others. We therefore urge the committee to adopt a very narrow amendment to add an exception for owners and managers of permanent supportive housing and subsidized senior housing to impose reasonable restrictions on firearms.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns with the provision in House Bill 228 pertaining to “subsidized residential premises.”