



CINCINNATI

CLEVELAND

COLUMBUS

DAYTON

TOLEDO

YOUNGSTOWN

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Senate President Larry Obhof
1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable House Speaker Bob Cupp
77 S. High St., 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Minority Leader Kenny Yuko
1 Capitol Square, 3rd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Minority Leader Emilia Sykes
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Bill Coley, Chair of Senate
Government Oversight & Reform Committee
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Don Jones, Chair of House Primary
& Secondary Education Committee
77 S. High St., 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Legislative Leaders and Committee Chairs:

We are writing to you today, as police chiefs and law enforcement professionals, to express our grave concerns about Senate Bill 383 and 317. As police chiefs who care deeply about protecting our communities, we urge you to consider the very dangerous implications of these measures, neither of which will reduce crime or promote law and order in our communities.

Under current Ohio law, a person can use force, including deadly force, to defend oneself anywhere. Passing SB 383 would upend centuries of traditional self-defense doctrine. It would threaten public safety by encouraging armed vigilantism and allow a person to kill another person in a public area even when he or she can clearly and safely walk away from danger.

In other states that have implemented similar laws to SB 383, gun violence and homicides have significantly increased. Florida's Stand Your Ground law was associated with a 32 percent increase in firearm homicide rates. In 79 percent of Florida's cases, the person could have retreated to avoid the confrontation. Additionally, 68 percent of the people killed in these confrontations were unarmed.

We urge this committee to also consider the disproportionate impacts of such laws on communities of color and the potential for increased gun violence. Stand Your Ground laws in other states have resulted in higher rates of justifiable homicides for White shooters and lower rates of conviction when the victim is Black.

We are also troubled by the extraordinary lack of training required in SB 317. Under current state law, all armed school employees—including teachers, security guards, and special police—must either complete an approved basic peace officer training course, or have completed 20 years of active duty as a peace officer. Basic peace officer training is regulated by the Ohio Peace Office Training Commission, and comprises approximately 728 hours of instruction. SB 317 would exempt teachers from this requirement, and allow school districts to employ armed personnel in schools with as little as 8 hours of concealed carry training (6 of which can be completed online)—or with no training at all, if firearms are not concealed when carried. As law enforcement professionals, we know the dangerous implications when individuals use and carry firearms without the proper training. Significantly reducing firearm training for school personnel will make our schools less safe and increase the likelihood that a student will be unintentionally harmed or killed by a firearm in a school.

Additionally, many of our communities have marked single-year highs in the number of homicides. As the stress of this pandemic continues to weigh on our residents, crime and violence have increased. Our police are working long hours to solve these cases and protect our communities. Passing these laws will make our jobs more difficult and they will make our communities less safe. We urge you to seriously consider the dangerous implications of these bills and oppose SB 383 and 317, which threaten the safety of our officers and our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliot Isaac, Chief of Police
CITY OF CINCINNATI

Calvin D. Williams, Chief of Police
CITY OF CLEVELAND

Thomas Quinlan, Chief of Police
CITY OF COLUMBUS

Richard Biehl, Chief of Police
CITY OF DAYTON

George R. Kral, Chief of Police
CITY OF TOLEDO

Robin R. Lees, Chief of Police
CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN

CC: The Honorable Members of Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
The Honorable Members of the Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee