TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 221

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Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Committee, good afternoon. I am Walt Davis from Lebanon, OH. I am here to testify in support of SB 221. I am a former Air Force officer, businessman and educator, and have worked in a wide variety of military, business and educational careers. I am a gun rights advocate. I created and operate the 2nd Amendment Advocates Coalition, a free organization of about 350 members. I get no income from the Coalition.

When the Dayton mass shooting occurred, everyone in Ohio was stunned, especially since it happened about 12 hours after another mass shooting in Texas, all in one weekend.  Governor DeWine quickly visited Dayton and was greeted by large crowds chanting "Do something!"  I feared that the very worst was coming to us:  AR-15 type rifles banned, large magazines banned, universal background checks, a red flag law for Ohio, and who knows what else.

None of that has happened. Soon after the shooting, I was invited by the Governor's Office to attend several meetings on the issue.  Several other significant Ohio gun rights organizations were also invited.  We were briefed on the Governor's proposed policy and invited to make input.  The Administration listened very closely.  We were encouraged that, from the outset, the focus would be on people (meaning perpetrators), not on hardware; and on due process, not on red flags.  Background check expansion had not yet fully evolved.

Remember the mass shooting in Las Vegas?  Bump stocks were outlawed quickly and quite easily.  With AR-15 type rifles used in both the Texas and Dayton shootings, and with the Dayton shooter using a 100 round magazine, Ohio was very ripe for massive political attacks on our guns.

It didn't happen. As you know, we are lucky to have a very strong team of elected officials in Ohio's top offices who support gun rights.  This team helped the Governor to resist overwhelming public and political pressure in order to keep our 2nd Amendment rights intact.  Strong Ohio has no hardware bans, no universal background checks, and no red flag laws.  It focuses strongly on identifying and disarming mentally sick people, with due process of the law in charge all the way.  I believe this provision will significantly reduce suicides as well.

Plus, and I consider this a **big** plus.  The 'expanded background check' turns out to be an **added protection** for gun owners who sell a gun.  A gun buyer can choose to do a simplified background check on him or herself. The specific gun is not identified in the process.  No gun registry is established.  When the serial numbered check shows eligibility to purchase a gun, and the gun is bought, if that buyer is later determined to have been not eligible to own or buy that gun, the seller, possessing the serial numbered certificate from the buyer, is legally immune to prosecution for making a negligent sale.  Today, we have no such immunity.  I predict that many more background checks will be made for safe person-to-person gun sales. This has the side benefit of satisfying some popular demand by increasing the number and frequency of background checks. I have heard that there is some disagreement that this personal background check is a good thing. I find no logic in those disagreements, though I do have a favorite personal opinion.

Is there anything about SB 221 that I don’t like? Yes. One or two trivial items that are not worth your time. I have contacted my legislators on those.

In summary, as a lifelong, avid gun owner and gun rights protector, I find SB 221 to be a heartening piece of legislation. It addresses the correct problems, and leaves us with **more** rights and protections, rather than less.

I have shared my opinions on SB 221 with the 350 members of my 2A Advocates Coalition. Only one answered that he had some concerns, but did not share them. One other sent me a carping article put out by another organization, but she offered no opinion of her own.

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 221. I hope that you will find this bill to be good for Ohio, and that you will support its adoption.

I am happy to answer any questions.