

Chairman Wilkin and distinguished members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in favor of HB227, the Constitutional Carry bill.

As an American, I value the rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution and its amendments. The issue before us today, of course, has much to do with the Second Amendment and the freedom it grants to keep and bear arms, primarily centering, in my opinion, around one phrase: "shall not be infringed".

An Ohioan, I also value the rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the State of Ohio, such as those in Article 1, Section 1 ("All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety") and Article 1, Section 4: "The people have the right to bear arms for their defense and security".

The bill before you for consideration embraces the spirit of both these documents well. It ensures that those who can legally own and operate a pistol in the State of Ohio can carry it with them at the ready, furthering the Ohio Constitution's objectives of preparedness to defend life and liberty, protecting property, and increasing safety.

I am sure that you and your staffers have done a significant amount of research to help form opinions on this bill and help you vote with the safety of Ohioans in mind, as well as their protecting their rights. I could cite numerous studies and reports that correlate lower violent crime rates with laws permitting Constitutional Carry; however, for the sake of brevity I will only focus on one.

Let's turn our attention U.S. News and World Report. Their research cites FBI data for violent and property crime in 2019. (The data is available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/crime-and-corrections/public-safety>.) The report cited Maine as being overall the safest state in the US, with the lowest violent crime rate and 4th lowest property crime rate. New Hampshire was the second overall safest state, with the 2nd lowest violent crime and property crime rates. Idaho was considered the third overall safest state. Now, these states are different in many ways - different geography, different racial and economic demographics, and different industries just to name a few. But they all share at least one thing in common - each of these three states has enacted a Constitutional Carry law.

Numerous states have enacted Constitutional Carry without any attributable ill effects. Currently more than 20 other states - including neighboring West Virginia and Kentucky - have enacted laws permitting Constitutional Carry. Another of our neighbors - Michigan - is considering this as well. The time has come for Ohio to join this distinguished group.

I urge you to support the spirit and values of freedom, independence, and safety embodied in Ohio's Constitution, and help Ohioans protect others and their property. I ask that you once again affirm Article 1, Section 4 of the Constitution of the State of Ohio and, through your actions to support this bill, signal that "The people have the right to bear arms for their defense and security" - whether inside their home or elsewhere. Support HB227. Vote for it, and when it comes to a vote to send it the Senate for consideration, support it then and urge your colleagues to do so as well. Stand with Ohioans throughout the state and support our rights while promoting our safety.

Thank you for your time and attention.

I am, sincerely and proudly,
Christopher L. Rankin
410 Geneva Point, Ashtabula County
Roaming Shores, OH 44084