

Testimony Opposing HB227

House Government and Oversight Committee

Submitted by: Kristine Woodworth, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

June 16, 2021

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kristine Woodworth and I am a volunteer with the Ohio Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I am speaking today to oppose HB 227, a dangerous permitless carry bill which would jeopardize public safety in Ohio.

Supporters of permitless carry will tell you that criminals don't follow laws and this bill only impacts law abiding citizens. But, that argument doesn't match up with the reality on the ground. We should make clear that permitless carry could embolden criminals and make them feel more comfortable carrying in public. Our permitting system ensures people get a background check and some hands-on safety training, including actually firing a handgun, before carrying a firearm in our communities, around our families. What we must understand is that Ohio's permitting system is the only background check a person may ever receive.

Ohio does not require background checks for firearm sales by unlicensed sellers, such as between strangers. According to a report from Everytown, there is an average of over 130,000 posts for firearms available for sale by unlicensed sellers in Ohio through one single website - for which no background check would be required. The report also found that, across the country, 1 in 9 people who tried to buy a gun online could not legally own a firearm, a rate seven times higher than the denial rate at gun stores or in other contexts where background checks are required. So, let's be clear, criminals are indeed buying guns from unlicensed sellers--because they can do so without a background check. Right now, if they bought that gun and carried it concealed in public without a permit they would be breaking the law. By requiring a person to obtain a background check before getting a permit, law enforcement can use this tool to stop people with dangerous histories from carrying concealed guns in public. Why would we want to make criminals feel more comfortable carrying in public, knowing they can now freely carry, no questions asked? Law enforcement opposes this bill because they understand that would be the new reality. Give law enforcement the tools to stop criminals from carrying guns in our communities. This bill would do the opposite, law enforcement would be stripped of that tool. Listen to them, as they are the ones with real world experience as to how this would complicate their jobs.

States that have had permitless carry have experienced [increases](#) in violent gun crimes specifically. Since Arizona enacted permitless carry legislation in 2010, the average annual rate

of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in the state increased by [8 percent](#) per year. Since Alaska enacted a permitless carry bill in 2003, the state has experienced a [65 percent increase](#) in the annual rate of aggravated assaults with a gun per year. In our state, Gun homicides have increased by 43% from 2010 to 2019, and gun deaths in the state have increased by 34%. Firearms are also the leading cause of death of children in Ohio. We want to work with you to find solutions to these problems, but this bill will only make them worse.

A majority of states require a permit to carry a concealed handgun, HB 227 would put Ohio in a minority of states, including in the Midwest.

Please oppose HB 227 and any efforts at permitless carry, in support of public safety and law enforcement.