

Testimony Opposing HB227

House Government and Oversight Committee

Submitted by: Chelsi Rhoades

First and foremost, I would like to thank Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney and other members of the Ohio House Government and Oversight Committee for allowing me to share my point of view on this issue that is so near to my heart. I'm a student at The Ohio State University majoring in public affairs and economics. Unfortunately I have firsthand experience about how gun violence can affect a family and a community. I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio and spent three years in the College Credit Plus program at Sinclair Community College, which is just a few blocks away from where the shooting in the Oregon District took place. I have also lost two grandparents and one of my uncles to everyday gun violence. These traumatic events have left my family and community in shambles. We are in need of meaningful reform, not radical legislation that would further endanger Ohioans.

In Ohio, deaths from gun violence have risen 54% from 2009 to 2018¹, yet the Ohio legislature continues to support dangerous legislation that the majority of Ohioans do not agree with. In fact, 88% of Americans agree that you should be required to get a permit before carrying a concealed weapon in public². These concealed carry permits require citizens to be trained on the handling and use of firearms. Stripping this requirement away will cause the amount of accidental shootings to rise, which will harm Ohioans. Additionally, removing concealed carry permits removes the safeguards, such as background checks, from the process.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports, <https://everytownresearch.org/everystat#Ohio>

² Kevin Ingham, "New Survey Finds Strong Opposition to Concealed Carry without a Permit" (memorandum, Strategies 360, March 2015), <https://every.tw/2tSNDyq>.

Meaning that dangerous and violent individuals would be able to legally carry concealed weapons. States that have weakened their firearm permitting system have seen violent crime rates increase 15%³. Conversely, states that provide law enforcement discretion to issue concealed carry permits saw 11% lower homicide rates compared to states that did not⁴. If this piece of legislation passes, it will only harm our citizens, not give them the protection that they need.

We need to ensure that only safe and responsible gun owners are able to carry concealed firearms in Ohio. It is obvious that House Bill 227 will not increase the safety of Ohioans and I encourage you to vote no on this dangerous bill. I'm very thankful to be able to voice my opinion, and hope that you will truly take it into consideration. Ohioans need common-sense gun reform, such as universal background checks and red flag laws, not extreme legislation that weakens the safety of our state.

³ John J. Donohue, Abhay Aneja, and Kyle D. Weber, "Right-To-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Control Analysis," NBER Working Papers (National Bureau of Economic Research, November 2018), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23510.pdf>

⁴ Michael Siegel and Claire Boine, "What Are the Most Effective Policies in Reducing Gun Homicides?" (Rockefeller Institute of Government, March 29, 2019), <https://rockinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/8-13-19-Firearm-Laws-Homicide-Brief.pdf>.