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Committees

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Reggie Stoltzfus State Representative 50th Ohio House District

Sponsor Testimony: HB 455 House Government Oversight Committee

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 455.

This legislation will provide an opportunity for a concealed handgun licensee or qualified military member to avoid charges for carrying a deadly weapon into a prohibited place if the person leaves upon request. An example of a prohibited place would be a store or restaurant where there is a sign that says "NO GUNS ALLOWED". This bill does not add to or subtract from what is defined as a prohibited place under current law. The LSC memo provided to the Chair's office outlines this important detail.

Current law leaves it possible for a CHL holder to be charged with a First Degree Misdemeanor for carrying in a prohibited place, when their full intention is to abide by the law. They should not run the risk of becoming criminals while attempting to lawfully exercise their Second Amendment rights. To protect the rights of business owners, there is a 4th Degree Misdemeanor of Criminal Trespass with a Deadly Weapon for failure to leave upon request or returning with a firearm to the same location within 30 days.

Many Ohioans, including my constituents, want to exercise their Constitutional rights without fear they will unknowingly violate the law or rights of business owners and be punished. This legislation seeks to protect unintentional violators from becoming criminals, while also providing a penalty for the rare instance when a CHL holder knowingly violates the law or another's rights by conceal carrying where they are not permitted to. There is a distinction between attempting to follow the law and unintentionally violating it, and proceeding with criminal intent. This bill acknowledges the difference.

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee. Thanks again for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 455. I'd be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.