

Opposition Testimony on House Bill 455
House Government Oversight Committee
Shane Wilkin, Chair
Andrea White, Vice Chair
Richard Brown, Ranking Member
Feb. 16, 2022

Submitted by:

Deborah Cooper

Thank you, Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and committee members, for considering this opposition testimony on House Bill 455.

I oppose HB 455 because it would infringe the rights of private property owners as well as the right of schools, including private schools, to prevent people from carrying firearms into their premises. More importantly, it would threaten the safety of all Ohioans.

With respect to private businesses: Even though businesses and schools could post conspicuous signs to prohibit persons from carrying firearms into their premises, under HB 455, a gun carrier would not be violating any law by carrying a concealed firearm into a store UNLESS a store employee asks the gun carrier to leave. How would a store employee know who is carrying a concealed firearm? Further, how many store employees, upon discovering that a person is carrying a deadly weapon, would be brave enough to insist that the person leave the premises? Does the Ohio government really have a right to tell a privately owned business that the business cannot prevent someone carrying a deadly weapon from entering the business premises?

With respect to private and public schools: Someone with a concealed carry license (or is assumed to have one, if SB 215 becomes law) who intends to shoot children and/or teachers in a school would not violate the law by entering school grounds UNTIL someone asks him/her to leave (assuming the concealed weapon can be identified). The U.S. Supreme Court, in *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) noted,"nothing in our opinion should be taken to cast doubt on longstanding...laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools...." (p. 626). There is NO Second Amendment right to bring loaded firearms into schools.

HB 455 would not only gut constitutional private property rights, but it would endanger the safety of Ohioans – and, in particular, our children, who deserve as much protection as we can afford them.

Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns.