

Government Oversight Committee  
Opposition Testimony on SB 215  
Submitted by: Shela Blanchard  
February 15, 2021

Chairman Wilkins, Vice Chair White, and Ranking Member Brown. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Shela Blanchard and I am writing as a concerned citizen in opposition to SB215.

This legislation would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership. Widening the net of who can carry concealed weapons, when gun violence is increasing in our state, is not a way to diminish gun violence and keep our communities safe.

Ohio's permitting system is effective, without requiring too much time or money, it ensures those carrying handguns in public have gone through a background check and training. A permitless carry law would gut essential permitting standards for carrying handguns in public. We know with rights comes responsibility. Responsibility means doing everything we can to make sure people who carry guns especially in public places go through the process to obtain a permit. SB215 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and sneak up on others.

Handguns require more skill to use properly than a car and are at least as lethal. According to The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (June 3, 2020), there were 38,680 fatalities from car crashes. Roughly 35,000 people are killed by guns every year. Yet prior to obtaining a driver's license, Ohio law includes classroom time, on the road practice with an instructor, 50 hours of on the road experience with a licensed citizen as well as a written test and driving exam, over a minimum of six months time. I've not heard of any legislation changing the requirement of obtaining a driver's license to zero hours and no exams. And that's for the sake of safety on the road. Our barber, and beauticians need a license and our Trauma specialists that are needed to help those impacted by gun violence are required to have license. I consult with a trusted licensed trauma therapist.

I ask you to consider the number of homicides, suicides and un-intentional shootings throughout our state. How will this bill lower those numbers? How, please explain to all the citizens of Ohio the data and research you have to prove this bill will decrease those numbers.

Throughout the legislative process, we've spoken out alongside law enforcement officers, Students, and public safety advocates in asking our lawmakers not to pass this dangerous Policy. Ohioans deserve safety and allowing anyone including myself to purchase a firearm and carry with no training is not in the best interest of Ohioans. I personally would find myself in a very precarious situation. I would be at danger of injuring or killing myself, and putting the public safety of those around me in harm's way. By voting in favor of this dangerous bill, you are putting the public safety of every Ohioan at a higher risk of being killed by someone who is carrying concealed without any training of how to operate, clean and store safely a firearm.

I ask you to please oppose SB215. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.