

**Opposition Testimony to SB215
Government Oversight Committee
Mimi Karon**

February 16, 2022

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown and Committee: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition of Senate Bill 215. My name is Mimi Karon. I am a very concerned citizen and Clevelander of 43 years. I am a mother of two children, a college student and a young working adult. Thankfully, neither of them live in Ohio and probably never will. Loose gun laws, and a statehouse that has chosen to focus on passing extreme laws that do not reflect their values, nor the values of most Ohioans have made this a very easy decision for them and their peers and I support their choice.

Ohio has the 20th highest rate of gun homicides and gun assaults in the U.S. Guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens, an average of 132 children and teens die by guns every year and 59% of those are homicides. 1,529 Ohioans die annually and an additional 3,552 are wounded. (Everytown, January 2021). With such statistics, I cannot imagine a mother would want her adult children settling in this state.

The office of the Attorney General reported in 2019 that sheriffs issued 132,385 concealed carry permits. Of these, 77,959 were renewals and 54,426 were new. Approximately 1,000 were suspended and the same were revoked. The applications denied in 2019 represented the third highest in our permit program's history. SB215 will support these 1,000 people denied and many others who have never applied because they know they would never be granted a permit. Or didn't want to take the time to obtain a Concealed Carry permit and it's training requirement. These are the people you are choosing to protect over my own children and others, including responsible gun owners. People who failed a background check or are unwilling to undergo eight hours of training are ranked higher on your priority scale than Ohio's children. Along with people who never even applied for a ccw because they knew passage was not an option. These are not the people who deserve your protection by removing the permit system. Children, responsible gun owners and citizens who make a choice in public to keep away from people supporting their right to open carry are the ones you should work to protect. We have rights as well. Particularly first amendment rights.

SB 215 is going to make the job of our law enforcement more dangerous, more challenging and potentially more deadly. Buckeye State Sheriff's Association, Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police are just three of the very many law enforcement organizations that have made it a priority to let their opposition to Permitless Carry clear. They deserve your unwavering support. Not a single law enforcement organization has come out in support of this bill. Supporting the men and women in blue should absolutely take precedent over the extreme wants of the gun lobby.

Gun violence is certainly a tremendous and growing problem in Ohio. The permit system works. Our Republican lawmakers have supported it since its beginning. Why is now the right time to

expand concealed carry. Why are gun rights activists given priority at this time when we already have a gun epidemic in our state and gun ownership is at an all-time high. This to me sounds not just counter-intuitive. It sounds extremely irresponsible and careless on behalf of our lawmakers.

Finally, if the Second Amendment to you truly means not be infringed, even though there have been weapons restrictions throughout our country's history, then you must be aware that the United States Constitution and the Ohio Constitution are clear when they both communicate that concealed carry is not a protected right.

Please reject SB215. Ohioans are exhausted from dealing with gun violence and I ask you to please focus on legislation that is going to "do something" to diminish this increasing problem. Widening the net to allow certain people to carry a concealed weapon who currently cannot is not about protecting the second amendment, which is not guaranteed in the US or the Ohio constitutions. It is about accommodating the extreme gun lobby, a small but very noisy and intimidating group in our state that does not care about the lives of our children or preserving the law of the land. Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony today.