

Opposition Testimony on SB 215  
Veterans and Public Safety Committee  
Feb. 22, 2022

Dear Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White and Ranking Member Brown and members of the committee: Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today.

My name is Joan Calem and I am an educator from Columbus. I am writing to you concerning SB215.

Please do not vote to allow SB215 to become Ohio law. This bill does not help to keep Ohio citizens safe in any way. Quite the opposite, it has the potential to make gun violence in our state much worse.

SB215 is incredibly dangerous for Ohioans. By permitting anyone who carries a weapon into a venue where firearms are prohibited to walk away without a charge, as long as that person leaves when asked, is inviting dangerous situations in places that are legally allowed to prohibit firearms. This is a bill asking for a fight.

SB215 is also anti-police. The bill would allow the carrying of concealed weapons by persons convicted of misdemeanor assault on an officer. There is no logical reason we should widen the net to include this group in the right to carry a concealed weapon.

Additionally, the bill removes the duty of a person carrying a concealed handgun who is stopped by the police to promptly notify the police the individual is carrying, and also removes any training requirement for the person carrying a concealed handgun.

And lastly, the bill also limits the power of police to stop and question a suspicious individual carrying a gun.

For all of these reasons, multiple law enforcement groups, such as the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Ohio Association of Police Chiefs, Buckeye State Sheriff's Association, the Prosecuting Attorney's Association, Toledo Police Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, as well as many individual law enforcement officials, including the Sheriff of Van Wert County, Chief of Orange Village, Hamilton County's Sheriff McGuffey and individual police have spoken very clearly in opposition of this and other permit-less concealed carry bills.

On top of everything already listed, this bill is also anti-victim - SB215 favors the shooter over the victim by giving the shooter the right, by filing - immediately in a criminal proceeding without any evidence and without the victim being a party - a claim to immunity from prosecution that will take the question of guilt or innocence of the defendant/shooter from the jury. Especially at that early state, the prosecution (and victim) will be unfairly put at a disadvantage.

There is nothing in this bill that will keep Ohioans safe. Please do not allow this bill to become Ohio law.

Sincerely,

Joan Calem