

Opposition Testimony SB215

February 17, 2022

From Jennifer Weinbrecht

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and committee members: Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Jennifer Weinbrecht. I live in Geauga County. 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. There is no reason to change who may obtain a CCW 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. It will make Ohio citizens and first responders less safe.

Currently, concealed carry requires a background check and training, because concealed carry has the potential to be far more dangerous to the public. SB215 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and surprise their victims. Neither the Ohio Constitution nor the United States Constitution guarantee a right to concealed carry. Gun rights activists manipulate the second amendment to further their "guns everywhere" agenda. Lawmakers need to stop giving in to them at the expense of the lives of Ohioans and law enforcement.

We've had friends who were murdered by a guy with a gun. Kids sitting in a nearby school's cafeteria one morning were murdered by a guy with a gun. This is the school my grandkids attend. A guy with a gun hung around outside my workplace years ago looking for his supervisor, who fortunately didn't go out to his car when expected. Someone realized what was going on and luckily, the guy with the gun was apprehended before he could shoot his supervisor. I didn't grow up expecting to hear guns being shot day and night in my "quiet rural neighborhood." I didn't grow up expecting to know lots of people who have died by gun.

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. 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, all for the sake of safety on the road. Legislation regarding concealed carry and who may obtain a license should be about safety. We should be thinking of ways to increase safety, not rushing to put guns in the hands of more people.

The only ones who benefit from this bill is the gun lobby who will make money from the increased sales of guns once the permitting system is removed. This reminds us of the tobacco companies who financially profited off of the public health threat to Americans posed by tobacco

use. Gun manufacturers lobby for these laws because they profit from them. If in fact guns truly did save lives, America would be the safest country in the world due to all the guns we have in circulation, and yet we are not.

We endure so many news stories about shootings in our country that we become insensitive to them. In other countries, gun deaths that happen here in one week would happen in a year. We don't have to keep living like this. My friends who live in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the UK, Germany, Japan, and other countries DO NOT LIVE LIKE THIS.

In Ohio, we need laws that will keep people safe. Changing the restrictions on who can obtain a CCW and then allowing anyone to carry is not the way. I ask you to please oppose SB215.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.