

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.

I want to believe this committee and the majority of Ohioans desire the same thing, the ability to keep our families and community members safe. This legislation does exactly the opposite. For the woman and family member of domestic violence, knowing her ex-spouse would now have the ability to make good on his threats to kill her. Her fear level is heightened. All the efforts she has taken to keep her children and self safe from the threats, that legislative extra protection will no longer exist leaving her children and self in danger.

Domestic Violence victims, Law enforcement, FOP and other advocacy groups understand the implications of this bill. Across the country states that have implemented “permitless carry” have seen an increase in violent crime. 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. This is frightening to a domestic violence victim. We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership and keep firearms out of the hands of those that should not have access. 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.

“Live-fire training is critical to making sure that people who carry guns in our state know how to load and fire that weapon properly and safely. When someone wants to get a license to drive a car, they have to prove they can operate a vehicle safely. It would be ludicrous to give someone a driver’s license after only watching an online video. A handgun carry permit should be no different.”

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.

Your barber, and beauticians need a license to service their customers 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.

How does this bill keep us safer? I ask you to consider the number of homicides, suicides and un-intentional shootings throughout our state. 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. 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. Consider that Mother that has been in hiding to avoid being killed by her abuser. Consider her children. This could very well be your family member.

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

*An NRA-certified firearm instructor in Tennessee, after the passage of a law reducing the training requirement for concealed carry permits in 2019.*