

Opposition Testimony SB215
February 16, 2022
Laura Sams
Government Oversight Committee

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown and committee members:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Laura Sams and I am writing as a concerned citizen of Ohio in opposition of SB 215.

When the citizens of Dayton, yelled to Governor DeWine, “Do something!” after the killings in the Oregon District, they did not mean for legislators to propose and pass laws that reduce requirements for obtaining guns. They were looking to our lawmakers to pass common sense gun laws to keep them safe, e.g., Red Flag Laws and requiring background checks on all gun sales.

This past year we have seen a record number of violent crimes in all of Ohio’s major cities. Going forward, we do not want to see even more gun violence in our state. States that have enacted permitless carry laws have seen a substantial increase in firearm violence.

*After Missouri enacted a permitless carry law in January 2017, St. Louis experienced a nearly 25% increase in the rate of aggravated assaults with a gun in 2017 to 2016. (Part 1 Crime Comparison Based on UCR Reporting Neighborhood Report. City of St. Louis. Jan. 6, 2017)

It concerns me that SB 215 would allow people without a permit or firearms safety training to carry a hidden, loaded gun on our streets. It isn’t prudent to allow an individual to purchase a potentially lethal weapon and not have a minimum training requirement. According to a March 2016 survey, 90 percent of Ohio voters support requiring a permit to carry a concealed handgun in public. (Survey USA Survey, March 2016)

SB215 puts law enforcement at a huge disadvantage. The bill would eliminate the requirement that Ohioans notify police officers during a traffic stop that they have a loaded weapon in their car. Additionally, the bill would allow people convicted of misdemeanors, such as an assault on an officer, to carry concealed weapons.

All of your constituents need to be heard when legislation is being considered. In addition to the 90 percent of Ohioans supporting a permit for carrying a concealed hand gun in public, the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police strongly oppose SB215 as does the Ohio Mayors Alliance.

I agree with what Hamilton County Sheriff Charmaine McGuffey testified: “Allowing virtually anyone in Ohio to conceal weapons on their person without training or background checks will make Ohio less safe.”

Please put the safety of your fellow Ohio citizens first and reject SB215.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Sams