

Testimony on Senate Bill 215
Government Oversight Committee

Submitted by:
Mollie Eardley

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB215. I oppose this bill because it enables untrained individuals to conceal and carry weapons.

My son just got a driver's license in the state of Ohio. In order to obtain that privilege, he needed to take a written test, attend instructional classes, complete 50 hours of practice, pass a road test and provide proof of insurance coverage. All of this, because the state of Ohio recognizes that driving is innately dangerous and can inflict harm on both the driver and others if not managed responsibly.

2020 data demonstrates that firearm deaths now outpace automotive deaths in the state of Ohio as well as on a national level. While Ohio is below the national average for automotive fatalities, our state exceeds the national firearm death rate. Despite this, there seems to be a continuing effort to remove safety precautions as it relates to gun ownership.

	Deaths	Deaths / 100,000
US Automotive	40,698	12.4
OH Automotive	1,328	11.4
US Firearm	45,222	13.7
OH Firearm	1,764	15.1

Sourced from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/injury.htm>. (inquiry submitted to obtain Ohio figures)

Placing guns in the hands of untrained and unverified individuals is dangerous for all involved, especially those who are in close proximity to the owner. 75% of firearm homicides are committed by a family member, acquaintance, or intimate partner. ⁽¹⁾ In addition, when individuals are not properly trained in handling and storing weapons, there is an increased risk of unintentional shootings. These shootings can harm the owner or an immediate family member (including children) who might gain access to the weapon. The risk of a successful suicide attempt also increases when there is uninhibited access to a gun.

Police officers oppose this bill because it makes their already dangerous job more challenging. This law will allow more guns in the hands of individuals with a high risk for violence. In fact, a recent study on policies that are most effective in reducing gun

homicides shows that laws that give authorities discretion over concealed permit carry are associated with an 11.1% lower homicide rate. ⁽¹⁾ Police officers will face an increased likelihood of gun presence during traffic stops and domestic dispute calls, with little recourse to investigate if that gun is legally held. This will add to the level of uncertainty in an already high risk scenario.

As lawmakers, I would hope that the safety and well being of Ohio citizens and police officers would be at the forefront of your objectives. I oppose Senate Bill 215 and hope that you will too, because it endangers Ohio citizens and its police officers.

(1) Siegel, Michael and Boine, Claire, What are the most effective policies in reducing gun homicides? March 29, 2019, <https://rockinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/8-13-19-Firearm-Laws-Homicide-Brief.pdf>