

Ohio House Government Oversight Committee
Opposition Testimony on Sub. SB 215
Submitted by Laura Robertson-Boyd
March 1, 2022

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 215 today. My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I live in Columbus, Ohio, and I am a volunteer with the Ohio Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a grassroots movement of Americans of all backgrounds fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment while protecting us from gun violence. Moms Demand Action is part of Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country with more than 8 million supporters nationwide.

We are here today to again oppose a dangerous permitless carry bill which would jeopardize public safety in Ohio. Ohioans support the current permit system and overwhelmingly oppose making it legal to carry a hidden, loaded handgun in public without a permit or safety training. Under this bill, a person could buy a gun - which in Ohio does not require a criminal background check - and then, without any further vetting or any safety training, immediately carry that loaded gun concealed down the street around our children and families. At the same time, law enforcement would lose a critical tool for stopping people with dangerous histories from carrying concealed guns in public. **That is why law enforcement officers have opposed attempts to pass permitless carry here in Ohio and across the country.** We agree with them when they note that this would interfere with their ability to enforce the law and keep people with dangerous histories from carrying guns in public.

There is no legitimate public safety reason for dismantling our current permit system. Supporters of this legislation falsely claim that it will reduce crime, and that in the few states that have moved to a permitless carry system, it hasn't become the "wild west." But facts matter, and we know that states that have enacted permitless carry laws have seen substantial increases in firearm-related crimes. For example, since 2003, when Alaska became the first state to enact permitless carry legislation, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state has increased by 65% per year [1]. Since Arizona enacted permitless carry legislation in 2010, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state has increased by 8% per year [2]. That increase combined represents more than 1,000 gun-related aggravated assaults per year.

According to a report from the *National Bureau of Economic Research*, "The most frequent occurrence involving crime and a good guy with a gun is not self-defense but rather the theft of the good guy's gun, which occurs hundreds of thousands of times each year.... As Michael Rallings, the top law enforcement official in Memphis, Tennessee, noted when commenting on the problem of guns being stolen from cars: 'Laws have unintended consequences. We cannot ignore that as a legislature passes laws that make guns more accessible to criminals, that has a direct effect on our violent crime rate'" [3]. **And in**

fact, data shows that states that have passed permitless carry legislation are experiencing a substantial increase in gun violence, with states that have weakened their permitting systems experiencing an 11 percent increase in handgun homicide rates [4] and a 13-15 percent increase in violent crime rates [3]. Thus, we know that SB 215 would increase, rather than decrease, the number of firearms-related crimes in Ohio, making Ohioans less safe.

I would like to add one more point of data that is important and relevant to this discussion. A new study in the journal *Trauma Surgery and Acute Care Open* found that firearms deaths have surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of years of potential life lost. The researchers concluded:

"The demand for total freedom and the second amendment have resulted in high access to firearms in this country and this is indisputable. The main argument is that the right to bear arms to prevent injury or to defend against aggressors may result in a small number of preventable deaths is a plausible theory, however, the data reveal that the resulting access to firearms has equated to magnitudes of death due to firearm suicides in the same individuals demanding access to firearms." The study also found "Firearm suicide was highest among white males in 2018 comprising 49.3% of total firearm deaths" [5]. Thus, relaxing Ohio's current firearms restrictions will only exacerbate this problem, and I urge you to consider the unintended consequences of your efforts.

In conclusion, SB215 is dangerous for Ohio. Moms Demand Action supports the ability of law-abiding citizens to carry a concealed handgun in public, but we believe they should undergo a background check, get a permit, and undergo training to do so. It's a simple system that keeps us all safe. We urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you,

Laura Robertson-Boyd
Columbus Local Group Lead
Ohio Chapter Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

1. Eleanor Dotomain, "Crime Reported in Alaska 2001," Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Alaska Department of Public Safety), <https://bit.ly/2SQDEUt>; Kristi Johnson, "Crime Reported in Alaska 2002," Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Alaska Department of Public Safety), <https://bit.ly/2wtDyZZ>; Christen L. Spears, "Crime in Alaska 2017," Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Alaska Department of Public Safety, August 2018), <https://bit.ly/37OZagy>; Christen L. Spears, "Crime in Alaska 2018," Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Alaska Department of Public Safety, September 2019), <https://bit.ly/2srLtoX>.
2. "Crime in Arizona 2008" (Arizona Department of Public Safety, Access Integrity Unit), <https://bit.ly/2V6IChk>; "Crime in Arizona 2009" (Arizona Department of Public Safety, Access Integrity Unit), <https://bit.ly/2SQNRjP>; "Crime in Arizona 2017" (Arizona Department of Public Safety, Access

Integrity Unit), <https://bit.ly/2PdLfdR>; "Crime in Arizona 2018" (Arizona Department of Public Safety, Access Integrity Unit), <https://bit.ly/2ZsFlce>.

3. John J. Donohue, Abhay Aneja, and Kyle D. Weber, "Right-To-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Control Analysis," NBER Working Papers (National Bureau of Economic Research, November 2018)

4. Michael Siegel, et al., "Easiness of Legal Access to Concealed Firearm Permits and Homicide Rates in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 12 (December 1, 2017): 1923–29, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304057>

5. Klein J, Prabhakaran K, Latifi R, et al. Firearms: the leading cause of years of potential life lost *Trauma Surgery & Acute Care Open* 2022;**7**:e000766. doi: 10.1136/tsaco-2021-000766