

Charles Spencer
Testimony to the
Government Oversight Committee
Against SB215

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White and Ranking Member Brown: My name is Charles Spencer. I am writing as a citizen in opposition to SB215 because experience in other states tells me it would increase gun deaths as well as violent assault in general. This legislation would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently get a license. Some legislators say gun laws only penalize law-abiding citizens. Current CCW license requirements in no way harm responsible gun owners. Legislation should not be based on such flimsy claims! We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership. Expanding 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, and does nothing to protect the rights of responsible gun owners.

Reasonable gun owners know that concealed carry should require a background check and training because it has the potential to be far more dangerous to the public. And they know that if concealed carry gets out of hand it will hurt those reasonable gun owners in the long run, as well as those who are victims of the likely increase in gun violence. The logic of current concealed carry rules based on protecting public safety - Both the Ohio Constitution and the United States Constitution do not guarantee this right.

Gun rights activists need to stop manipulating the second amendment to further their "guns everywhere" agenda. But, more importantly lawmakers need to stop caving to them at the expense of the lives of Ohioans.

SB215 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and sneak up on others. 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. Yet prior to obtaining a driver's license, Ohio law includes classroom time, on the road practice with an instructor, on the road experience with a licensed citizen, a written test and a driving test. Can you imagine proposing legislation changing driver licensing requirements to zero hours and no exams. That's because you value about safety on the road. Legislation regarding concealed carry and who may obtain a license should be about safety, not about putting guns in the hands of more citizens and criminals.

Changing the restrictions on who can obtain a CCW and then allowing anyone to carry will harm more people. Research shows that states with passing legislation that weakens concealed carry standards have an 11% increase in gun deaths and 15 to 17% increase in all violence.

I ask you to please, once again, honor the trust the public has in you, stand up for what's right and oppose SB215. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with the committee.