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**15<sup>th</sup> House District**

December 6, 2022

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee; thank you for allowing our office to submit written testimony for House Bill 661.

With recent legislation allowing more gun owners to openly carry than ever before, safe storage has become an ill-forgotten but massively important topic. Studies have shown that over half of all firearm owners fail to safely store their firearms, a measure that reduces the risk of accidental injury and in death among all populations but especially children.<sup>1</sup>

House Bill 661 was pursued after a constituent of ours – a former gun safety trainer – shared his thoughts to proactively assist gun buyers and to give them gentle guidance with how they should be handled and stored, and mitigate the damage that gun violence can cause.

HB 661 would require each federally licensed firearms dealer to provide and attach a trigger-lock to each gun purchase under Revised Code 2923.25. This step would encourage firearm safety from the first point of contact that consumers will have with their firearm purchases. There is a clear correlation across multiple studies demonstrating that safe firearm storage is associated with a lower risk for accidental injury and death, lower risk of firearm-related suicide<sup>2</sup>, and both increasing awareness as well as improving the safety of household members.<sup>3</sup>

While the number of firearms in Ohioan households and the sale of firearms within the state will continue to rise, there are measured and sensible steps that we can take to ensure that Ohioans are well-protected from any external forces, and that begins with being aware of safe storage – starting at the first point of firearm acquisition.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss HB 661 with you; please reach out to our office should you have any questions.

1. Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *JAMA*. 2005;293(6):707–14.

2. Shenassa ED, Rogers ML, Spalding KL, et al. Safer storage of firearms at home and risk of suicide: a study of protective factors in a nationally representative sample. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 2004;58(10):841–8.

3. Conwell Y, Duberstein PR, Connor K, et al. Access to firearms and risk for suicide in middle-aged and older adults. *Am J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 2002;10(4):407–16.