

ACS Chapters | Ohio



November 29th, 2022

The Honorable Matt Dolan
Chair, Finance Committee
Ohio Senate
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee—

On behalf of the Fellows of the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Surgeons and Ohio Committee on Trauma, I am writing today to urge your support for Senate Bill 357, legislation that seeks to help address gun violence and mass shootings. This is a priority issue for our Fellows as many practice in Ohio's trauma centers and routinely treat shooting victims.

Our nation has endured many mass shootings in recent years and Ohio has unfortunately been part of this trend. Tragedies including the 2012 Chardon High School shooting, the 2018 Fifth Third Center Shooting in Cincinnati, and the 2019 shooting in Dayton's Oregon District have resulted in lives lost and lives irreparably harmed. Many of these shootings can be prevented and SB 357 seeks to offer some solutions to the gun violence epidemic.

Most notably, SB 357 establishes a new safety protection order that would allow a court to temporarily remove firearms from the possession of an individual who is experiencing a severe mental health incident or is threatening violence or self-harm. 'Red Flag' laws are becoming increasingly common in many states and are meant to ensure individuals cannot access a firearm if they are at increased risk of committing a mass shooting or other violent action.

SB 357 also seeks to strengthen the current background check system by ensuring information including safety protection orders are submitted to the appropriate state and federal databases in a timely manner. SB 357 also seeks to address potential issues that can arise from private party sales by establishing a seller protection certificate process. Under this new program, an individual selling a firearm could request the purchaser obtain a certificate from the Ohio Department of Public Safety which would verify that they are eligible to own or possess firearms. Additionally, the bill strengthens laws prohibiting strawman purchases of firearms and generally raises the age of purchase for firearms to 21.

Finally, SB 357 allocates \$175 million to address behavioral health access issues by investing in workforce development and new facilities. Taken together, these issues represent an important step forward in combatting gun violence in our state. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Amy McDonald, MD, FACS
President
Ohio Chapter, American College of Surgeons