

December 13, 2021

Veterans and Public Safety Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Opposition to SB 215, the "Permitless Carry" bill

Submitted by: Julia Elkus, Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 215. My name is Julia Elkus and I am a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio. I am writing today to express my concerns regarding this bill and its potential impact on the safety of all Ohio citizens.

My sister-in-law was on the second floor of Fifth Third bank in 2018 when a gunman shot and killed three people in the lobby below her. Her dear friend and colleague was trapped in a revolving door where she became a sitting duck target for the gunman. She was shot 12 times; it's a miracle she lived. Of course, guns used illegally are not the only ones that are deadly. Hundreds are injured or killed every year in tragic situations where guns are used inappropriately, inaccurately or are fired accidentally. There is simply no denying that guns have devastated the lives of thousands of innocent people. Unfortunately, as you well know, gun violence trends continue unabated, as we witness dramatic increases in gun injury and death in Ohio and around the country. In acting on behalf of its citizens, the Ohio state legislature should be doing everything in its power to prevent the tragic injuries and deaths associated with firearms. Instead, this bill absolves those who wish to carry concealed weapons from the most basic responsibilities associated with that right, thereby increasing the risk of harm to everyone else.

One responsibility eliminated by this bill is the requirement for 8 hours of training in firearms use. In contrast, I have a daughter who is in the midst of her 10th YEAR of medical training (an estimated 30,000 hours). She has one more year to go. All so that she serves her patients with

care and *does no harm*. Is there anything that can do more harm in less time than a loaded gun? Is it too much to ask that those who wish to carry a concealed weapon train for one DAY?

Boaters in Ohio are required to complete an education course and then carry a boater education card with them when on the water. Education and a permit. These are deemed necessary for safety purposes. In 2019 there were 13 boating related fatalities. How can you justify waiving these most basic standards, education and a permit, for those who carry a loaded gun when there were **1,500** deaths in 2019 related to firearms?

With rights come responsibilities. The right to carry a concealed weapon should not supersede my right (or that of any Ohioan) to feel safe in my own community. Obtaining a permit and receiving training are commonsense requirements that reduce the inherent risk associated with carrying and concealing a deadly weapon. These safeguards do nothing to infringe upon the right to bear arms – they only reduce the risk of harm to innocent citizens by creating a mechanism for identifying those with criminal records who should *not be allowed* to carry a concealed weapon, and for ensuring that those who do carry loaded firearms that no one else can see (and thereby protect themselves from) have at least a minimal amount of training. It makes no sense to abandon all safety measures and remove any responsibility from individuals who will be carrying loaded guns in public – especially guns no one can see or protect themselves from. In the Supreme Court's *Heller* decision, conservative Justice Scalia reminded us that it is “not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.” Again – with rights come responsibilities.

According to a March 2016 survey, 90 percent of Ohio voters support requiring a permit to carry a concealed handgun in public. **At a time when gun violence is already devastating the lives of thousands of Americans, I respectfully ask that you protect the safety of all Ohioans and respect the wishes of an overwhelming majority by voting no on this bill.**

Respectfully,

Julia Elkus

