

Government Oversight Committee
Opposition Testimony: HB 51
By Rob Pierson

To the Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the committee: Thank you for this chance to testify against HB 51.

I recently retired as the Deputy Director of Child Support - Stark County Job and Family Services. In my career, I have seen families struggle with the impact of gun violence in their communities. I am also the father of a grown son and the proud grandfather of 2 children, one with special needs.

I am strongly convinced that HB 51 is too extreme for Ohio.

If this bill passes, present and future federal gun laws could not be enforced in Ohio. In fact, our police and our towns, cities and counties will be slapped with law suits and \$50,000 fines (per incident) for following federal law. Important federal safeguards like background checks, disqualification for gun ownership and age limits for owning AR-15s will be ignored in Ohio. It will allow more people who should not have guns to carry them.

In my work, I saw many domestic abuse situations. HB 51 will make it easier for abusers to carry a gun. Under existing federal law, people convicted of abuse cannot concealed carry. If HB 51 passes, Ohio's current state law will weaken the restrictions that prevent convicted abusers from carrying guns. More abusers will be "qualified" to concealed carry. Every month, an average of 70 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner in the US. (1) Putting more guns in the hands of more abusers will get more women shot. Abusers with firearms are five times more likely to kill their female victims.(2)

I worry for my own children and grandchildren over the Ohio we are building for them. They shouldn't be in danger of being shot just for going to work, shopping, or going to the park. Ohio is headed in the wrong direction on gun violence! The rate of gun deaths in Ohio has increased **52%** from 2012 to 2021, compared to a **39%** increase nationwide. This means that in 2021 there were **648** more gun deaths in Ohio than in 2012. (1) We must do better.

I urge you to Vote AGAINST HB 51.

Thank you for your attention,
Rob Pierson

Resources:

1. CDC: Underlying cause of death, 2012-2021
2. Jacqueline C. Campbell et al, "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships....", American Journal of Public Health, 93, no. 7, July 2003
3. Everytown analysis of CDC, National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), 2019. Last updated: 1.26.2022