

Testimony on House Bill 51
Government Oversight Committee
March 14, 2023
Submitted by: Leah Bunck, LSW

Committee Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan and Committee Members, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 51. I am writing to you today as a mother of two, spouse of a teacher who was involved in a school shooting, voter, and social worker.

I oppose this bill because it is a danger to Ohioans, and particularly women and mothers. Intimate partner violence is a real concern and danger for Ohio women. HB51 will allow an abuser convicted of domestic violence or under a domestic violence restraining order to be deemed a qualifying adult (ORC sec. 2923.111(A)(2)(B) who can carry a concealed firearm without a permit. I personally know a mother of 3 who was shot by her partner and did not survive. Unfortunately, this is one of many cases in our state, and this bill is very dangerous.

If in place, this bill also puts our law enforcement in greater danger since domestic violence calls are often the most dangerous for police. With gun ownership and gun violence increasing in our state, I'm angry that the sponsors of this bill feel that protecting women and law enforcement is not a priority as this bill demonstrates.

It is shameful to me that the State of Ohio would even consider passing legislation that could lead to putting women and police at risk for more harm at the hands of guns.

I highly encourage this committee to rethink the proposal of this bill, and prioritize the important things for Ohioans- keeping them safe. Legislation like HB 51 does not belong in our state and I encourage you to vote against this bill and use more time focusing on what really matters in our state and for your constituents.

Respectfully,

Leah Bunck, MSW, LSW