

Committee Chairperson Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan and Committee Members:

My name is Megan Smith, I am concerned citizen and I wish to voice my strong opposition to HB 51, the Ohio Second Amendment Preservation Act, which excludes firearm braces and stabilizing devices from laws governing sawed-off firearm and dangerous ordnance.

I'll be honest, I've looked at the legislative analysis for this bill and watched the sponsor and proponent testimony on the Ohio Channel and I don't understand most of the legalese and what it would do. But I do understand this part about excluding firearm braces. This proposed legislation is in direct response to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives (ATF) ruling regarding arm braces being regulated as short-barreled rifles.

Short-barreled rifles are unusually dangerous because they can be easily concealed like a handgun, but have the firepower and accuracy of a rifle. Until recently, they've rarely been used in crimes because of a federal law that requires them to be registered with ATF. However, the gun industry has now designed certain accessories to convert AR-15 or AK-47 style pistols into short-barreled rifles, and members of the public are using these accessories to get around the law.

We've already begun to see the tragic consequences when people create unregistered short-barreled rifles using AR-15-style pistols and arm braces. In August of 2019, a mass shooter killed 9 people and wounded 17 more right here in Ohio at the Dayton shooting, using this kind of weapon. In March 2021, a gunman killed 10 people at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado using another one. The easy availability of these weapons poses a serious public safety threat.

The gun lobby claims that these accessories are arm braces meant to help people with disabilities shoot accurately, but some of these "arm braces" create short-barreled rifles. ATF's rule identifies objective design features that indicate when a firearm with an attached arm brace should be classified as a short-barreled rifle. This rule keeps weapons out of the wrong hands without preventing access to arm braces by people who really need assistance because of a disability.

I support the ATF's rule in addressing an increasingly important public safety problem. I strongly oppose any piece of Ohio legislation that puts that ruling in jeopardy or nullifies it in Ohio. I don't want to see anyone in my family or community become a victim of these modified firearms. And I'm certain that if you asked the families of those shot in Dayton, they would also ask you to strongly oppose this bill.