

Ohio House Government Oversight Committee  
Committee Chair Bob Peterson

Opposition Testimony for HB 51

Ann Shroyer  
March 14, 2023

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

My name is Ann Shroyer, resident of the state of Ohio (unlike some of the proponent testimony last week) and I am here to ask you to please oppose HB51.

I would like to note this bill only has its 2 primary sponsors and not a single other member of the House has signed on to be a co-sponsor, which seems telling that there is a lack of profound out and proud support for this bill.

I have family in law enforcement and this bill is chilling as it only continues the trend toward making the job of law enforcement more dangerous and more difficult with this further push of Guns Everywhere legislation. Your co-workers in the State Senate are pushing a bill to lower the age of a law enforcement officer to 18 in this state, to address the shortage of qualified officers, and yet HB 51 would then prohibit the state from hiring qualified, former federal law enforcement officers who in the past had enforced federal gun regulations. HB 51 also places a bounty on officers/agencies with a civil suit and fines of \$50,000 per incident for enforcing federal gun regulations in our state.

If fiscal responsibility is a priority of this general assembly, what is the purpose of promoting HB 51? This bill will immediately require an expensive legal fight that will waste taxpayer time & money as its unconstitutionality was already recognized by a federal court last week - a similar law in Missouri was overturned there. While the lawmaker from Missouri who spoke here last week was excited to spend their taxpayer money, Ohio does not need to join such wasteful behavior. Ohioans do not need advice on gun violence prevention or gun laws from Missouri. Missouri has the 8th highest rate of gun violence in the country. Their gun deaths in the years from 2011-2020 have increased by 70% over TWICE THE RATE of the rest of the country - they are not a model for ANYTHING gun related.

Finally - HB 51 is particularly dangerous for women. According to Everytown's research, each month 70 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. Nearly 1 million report they have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner. 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. If you look at statistics compiled by the Ohio Domestic Violence Network - note that

Rep Plummer & Rep Abrams have received awards from ODVN - 91% of the domestic violence fatalities in Ohio in July 2021 - June 2022 were caused by a gun. This bill will allow convicted domestic abusers to permitless carry a firearm - like the man I saw at an Ashland gas station with a handgun tucked in the back of his pants. I volunteered with a crisis response phone team in Toledo many years ago and did ride alongs with police officers and was told how domestic violence calls were their most dangerous calls. In Westerville in 2018, two of our police officers, Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering were shot and killed while responding to a domestic violence call. I lived in central Pennsylvania for a time, within less than 2 months in 2016 - 2 law enforcement officers, Scott Bashioum and Landon Weaver, were shot and killed. Both were responding to domestic violence related calls. Both were killed by a domestic abuser with a gun.

In 2018, on a Saturday in Central PA I drove past a neighbor I did not know, about a mile from my house. She was outside, working in the garden. Less than 24 hours later, she was dead, shot and killed in her car in her driveway as she tried to get away from her husband with a gun on a Sunday afternoon. I drove past this house almost every day, and it was a fluke that I took a different route with my 4 year old son out of our neighborhood on this Sunday. I later met the neighbor who called 9-1-1 and then attempted to help the victim, holding her head together, while the murderer was still outside. I also met the victim's next door neighbor who saw the husband shoot himself in the backyard. This was a lovely tree lined neighborhood and she was murdered less than 50 yards from a private golf course where my then State Rep played golf.

HB 51 will only help perpetuate more gun violence toward women (DV victims are mostly women), inhibit women calling authorities, because they know even if their abuser is convicted, he can still permitless carry a firearm in Ohio. In Ohio protecting a gun would be more important than protecting women and children and all victims of domestic violence.

Thank you for your time. This is a dangerous bill that does not deserve any more of this committee's time. Please do not support HB 51.