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Good morning, Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and Government Oversight Committee members. I stand before you here today to support Ohio House Bill 218.

The Ohio Constitution, adopted in 1912, grants municipalities "home rule" powers as long as local ordinances don't conflict with the state's general laws. However, lawmakers have passed [measures to preempt local government action](#) on plastic bag fees for traffic cameras.

For example- there are both state statutes and local ordinances for dogs in Ohio. The state defines how a dog is determined to be dangerous and what you can and cannot do with a dog. However, there are local ordinances that may ban certain breeds of dogs or even restrict the number of dogs you can own in your private home. Local rules may also require specific immunization for your dogs. Some local ordinances also include leash laws, including some municipalities requiring insurance for specific breeds. Ohio law, however, does not permit pet dogs to run loose. They must be under someone's control, and if a dog is in heat, she must be on a lease.

If we can provide preempted local government actions for animals, even ones deemed dangerous, why can we offer this same exemption for local municipalities for guns? Laws that do not require the giving up guns- for those lawfully and legal owners but laws that, in any case, will help our respective communities.

This bill is about eliminating section 9.68 of the Revised Code to let our local communities have more say in how we handle gun-related issues. This is important, especially when we see the hurt caused by gun violence in our neighborhoods. Here in Ohio, we've seen the heartbreaking effects of gun violence up close, and many of us. Our neighbors, families, schools, and churches have felt the pain. The impact of gun violence is something this committee knows all too well. In this committee members' districts alone, from 2018 to 2021, 3,168 lives and counting were claimed by gun violence. This bill isn't just reacting to numbers; it's about understanding the real hurt of gun violence victims and their families. Every gunshot wound, every life lost too soon, creates waves of sadness in our communities. The pain felt by moms, dads, brothers, sisters, and children is something we can't ignore.

Black men and women are more likely than their White, Hispanic, or Asian counterparts to be victims of gun violence, according to the [CDC](#). Do we continue to ignore the issue of gun violence because the victims are disproportionately People of Color? Does this explain why we are so slow to take action on this issue that is killing thousands in our state alone? It is time that we wake up and recognize the disproportionate impacts of gun violence and treat it like the

public health issue it is. Not just in communities of color but in Urban, Suburban, and rural areas as well

We ask our schools and communities to solve every problem in our communities. Still, we, as a body of esteemed individuals of various backgrounds and educational attainment, should be championing ways to reduce the impact of gun violence in our districts and communities. We all see the impact of guns just walking and talking throughout our districts.

The people of Ohio believe we are not listening to them. We must work together as those who care about gun rights and people who really would like to see more sensible regulations to reduce gun violence. Therefore, I am asking the Chair- Chair Peterson for at least the opportunity of proponent and opponent testimony. As you know, this bill has been introduced before, but I know not the first. But I am asking for the voices of Ohioans to be heard in this committee. So please, Mr. Chair, can we have a hearing on HB 218 to hear possible solutions to the gun issue that plagues many of our communities?

As you hear, the story of gun violence isn't just a bunch of numbers; it's a harsh reality that keeps happening. By passing House Bill 218, local leaders can create rules that work best for their areas. This is about listening to the people living through the pain and understanding that the same rules don't work for everyone. House Bill 218 shows we care about protecting people and making our places safer. It honors those we've lost by giving our communities a better chance to stop these tragedies from happening again.

As lawmakers, we have to do something when our people are hurting. It's not about politics; it's about doing what's right. We can't let fear and sadness be what we leave behind for our kids and grandkids. Passing House Bill 218 can help change the story to hope, safety, and action driven by our communities. I ask my fellow lawmakers, no matter what party you're from, to support this bill, stand with those hurt by gun violence, and work together to make Ohio safer for everyone.

In closing, my goal/our goal is not to pry or take anyone who is lawfully and legally allowed and supportive of the Second Amendment guns but to find a balance between due process, common sense, and the Second Amendment.

Thank you for listening. Now, I turn to my esteemed colleague Rep. Upchurch, and afterward, we are here to answer any questions or discuss why this bill is so important.