



**OHIO HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE  
OPPONENT TESTIMONY - HOUSE BILL 189  
OCTOBER 3, 2023**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on House Bill 189.

As a bipartisan coalition of mayors in Ohio's largest cities, we oppose HB 189 as a matter of public safety because it will increase the number of firearms and munitions on the streets of our communities, and therefore increase the number of firearm deaths of Ohioans.

Over the last twenty years, Ohio's gun-death rate (gun deaths per every 100,000 people) has doubled, increasing from 7.8 deaths in 2000 to 16.2 deaths in 2020. Among the ten most populous states, Ohio now has the third highest gun-death rate in the nation.

It's not just cities that are impacted by gun violence. Rural areas in states like Ohio with weak gun laws also experience higher rates of gun deaths. The five Ohio counties with the highest gun-death rates are Jefferson, Jackson, Pike, Gallia, and Meigs Counties.

According to the Rockefeller Institute, researchers have consistently found that more guns equals more gun deaths when looking at all 50 states from 1981 to 2010. This finding has been replicated in numerous other studies. (Rockefeller Institute for Government, More Guns, More Death: [LINK](#))

The proponents of the bill have said that incentivizing the sale of firearms and munitions will allow citizens to purchase firearms for protection and use more bullets at the range for practice. This is probably true. Using this logic, however, it is also likely that this bill could provide a state-sponsored tax break for a homicidal mass shooter or tax-exempt bullets for another horrific school shooting.

We believe that the state should use its taxing authority to incentivize things that benefit Ohioans, not kill them. Providing tax incentives to increase the quantity of guns in our cities is a bad policy choice that will not significantly enhance Ohioans' rights, and is a poor use of the state's taxing authority to influence behavior. We urge you to decline to advance this bill out of committee.