



**OHIO HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE  
PROPONENT TESTIMONY - HOUSE BILL 186  
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 written testimony in support of House Bill 186.

For all of the same reasons that we oppose HB 189 as a matter of public safety, because it would increase the number of firearms and munitions on the streets of our communities, and therefore increase the number of firearm deaths of Ohioans, we likewise support HB 186. Incentivizing the purchase of firearms safety devices is a good use of the state's taxing authority to ensure that when Ohioans engage in their Second Amendment right to bear arms, they do so responsibly and as safely as possible.

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.

Research has consistently shown, however, that when gun safety devices are used, the risk of firearm injury and death is decreased. Moreover, the use of gun safety devices, such as trigger locks, firearm lock boxes, and gun safes, reduces the chances of unintentional and self-inflicted firearm injuries and deaths. Adolescents and youth who reside in a home with unlocked firearms are almost 3 times more likely to successfully complete a suicide attempt.

We believe that the state should use its taxing authority to incentivize things that benefit Ohioans, and we believe that the evidence clearly shows that incentivizing the use of gun safety practices and safe gun storage benefits the many Ohioans who reside in or visit homes where firearms are stored and used. Thus, we urge you to support HB 186.