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9<sup>th</sup> District

State Senator Paula Hicks- Hudson  
11<sup>th</sup> District

135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

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### **Sponsor Testimony – Senate Bill 209 Committee May 22, 2024**

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee thank you for allowing Senator Hicks-Hudson and I to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 209.

Ohio is one of 17 states that require lost or stolen firearms to be promptly reported to law enforcement. First adopted in July of 1996, the 121<sup>st</sup> General Assembly chose to prioritize the safety of Ohioans by enforcing this legislation, where those who failed to report the lost or stolen firearm, if found guilty, received a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. However, since the introduction of this legislation the landscape of gun ownership and gun regulation here in Ohio has vastly changed.

Over 380,000 guns are stolen each year from private gun owners. Gun owners who carry are three times more likely to have a gun stolen compared to those who do not. In cities that report crime data to the FBI it was found that one gun is stolen from a car every nine minutes in the United States.

A decade ago it was less typical for guns to be stolen from vehicles, however in 2022 over half of the known stolen firearms were taken from a vehicle. This amounts to nearly 62,000 guns stolen from cars across 337 different cities. Guns that are stolen more than often make their way into the hands of people who may be prohibited from having guns. This inevitably increases the likelihood of mishandling the firearm, resulting in harm to oneself or others.

As these numbers continue to rise, it is imperative that we consider measures to address this growing concern.

Senate Bill 209 aims to strengthen accountability for responsible gun ownership. Senate Bill 209 would change the current 4<sup>th</sup> degree misdemeanor to a 1<sup>st</sup> degree misdemeanor. A misdemeanor of the first degree in the State of Ohio has the potential of an individual serving up to six months in jail and up to a \$1,000 fine.

As a responsible gun owner, the hope is that reporting a lost or stolen firearm would be of no question. This is common sense legislation with the main intent focused on saving lives.

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee I urge your consideration of this legislation and would be happy to take questions at this time