



Buckeye Firearms Association

Testimony of Rob Sexton

On behalf of Buckeye Firearms Association

Before the House Judiciary Committee

March 18, 2025, 11:00 AM

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Rob Sexton, Legislative Affairs Director for Buckeye Firearms Association. BFA is Ohio's premier defender of the Second Amendment. We are strong proponents of House Bill 5 because it addresses a long-standing issue in Ohio law.

I will speak on the general principles behind our advocacy for House Bill 5. Because this legislation deals with our judicial system, I have brought with me an expert witness who routinely practices law dealing with firearms-related cases. Derek DeBrosse is licensed to practice in all Ohio State and Federal Courts, the U.S. Supreme Court, and all US Armed Forces courts of jurisdictions. He is one of our nation's most knowledgeable attorneys on firearms related law. After I speak to the general principles of our core issues in HB 5 Derek will speak to the mechanics about how current law poorly functions and how it is properly addressed in this legislation.

Whether in regard to the US Constitution or the Ohio Constitution, it is understood that the civil rights laid out in these foundational documents are God given, and as such restrictions on these rights should exist only in the most extreme circumstance such as truly violent criminals or those who have been adjudicated to be mentally incapacitated.

The framers of our Constitutions did not envision a lifetime of lost Constitutional protections for low level offenses, and yet that is what too often takes place in Ohio law. Over the last three General Assemblies, legislators have discussed how best to strike an adequate balance.

A balance that allows the state to rightfully punish those who flagrantly and often repeatedly violently flout the law, while at the same time restoring the rights of those who have committed low level offenses for which they have paid their full measure of debt to society.

House Bill 5, under the direction of Representative Josh Williams and Bernard Willis, strikes this appropriate balance. Ohio law enforcement tells us that the vast majority of crime is committed on a repeat basis by the same small group of people. HB 5 addresses this issue fairly. At the

same time House Bill 5 provides a clear pathway for those who have paid their debt and lived clean for five years or more to see their rights restored.

This is an appropriate balance because we are addressing the fundamental right of life and liberty. Current Ohio law makes people choose between the ability to defend their families and complying with the law, even when their underlying offense may have been a low-level conviction from 25 years ago.

Buckeye Firearms Association has long wanted to see this flaw in Ohio law fixed, and we're grateful to Representatives Williams and Willis for taking it on. We ask this committee to consider the balance struck in this bill to address both the repeat violent offender and the fully rehabilitated and vote favorably to send House Bill 5 to the full House for consideration.