

HB 5 - Ohio Assembly

“to broaden the scope of relief from firearms disability, and to modify the sealing procedure for misdemeanors and fourth and fifth degree felonies”

DECLARATION OF RALPH A. HUTCHINSON

I, Ralph A. Hutchinson, declare as follows:

I offer the following facts regarding my California case of 26 July 2016:

- Possession of a Noncompliant Firearm pursuant to California restrictions

1. I have not engaged in any criminal behavior since my conviction.

2. I take full responsibility for the conduct leading to my conviction.

3. Before my conviction, I worked hard to obtain my bachelor's degree in finance, a master's degree in business, and a graduate banking degree. After my education, I worked for over 30 years at banks, the US Treasury, and the Federal Reserve. I had never been in any trouble prior to this incident.

4. My father served in the army as a World War II veteran, through the Ohio National Guard activated and attached to the 90th Infantry Division in the European theatre. He served valiantly from 1944-1945 earning the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in battle, and Bronze Star for valor. He was wounded in the foot while advancing on a manned and fortified concrete bunker on the German, Swiss, French border and eventually immobilizing the target.

As a result, a large part of my childhood involved going with him to the gun range, not the golf/driving range. In his strict manner, he taught me skilled and safe handling of firearms. He wanted me to understand that it was not a toy, the way that video games portray them. I wanted to pass on these lessons that my father taught me to my own son. I also voluntarily counseled nearly 100 beginners in safe handling taking them to the range for the first time and supervising their progression in exercising their Second Amendment rights, between 2012 and 2016.

5. But I had made a major mistake in not making the modifications to the magazine extraction device required by infringing California laws. I am incredibly sorry for this mistake and take full responsibility for not adhering to the local laws.

Below is what's known as a "Bullet Button" in California, required on AR-15 rifles. It requires a smaller sharp point to depress the center of the ordinary magazine release thus delaying the release and in theory delaying time to reload another magazine. Ohio and nearly every other state just required a finger tip to push the larger release button. The modification is an \$11 snap-on snap-off component.



6. After I was taken into custody, my car was impounded and I lost everything. I became homeless. While living in a homeless shelter in California, I finally got a job at a bank in Ohio in July 2020 and moved in with my sister. I worked there for about a year and half, and then in January 2022, I left that place of employment and have been looking for a job since working minimal wage odd jobs or an occasional short-term bank consulting contract. Last month I was offered a \$100/hr (\$180k year) position with a top 3 CPA Firm reviewing FNMA for a year+ contract in Washington DC, a US Government Agency, however, during the background check my convictions were uncovered and I was denied the position. I currently receive SNAP benefits and Medicaid to survive and rely on my 21 year old son for household living expenses for survival. I received such benefits once before in 2022 during a time of unemployment. My conviction history has made my background checks extremely emotionally draining and resulted in denial of approximately 50% of the job offers.

I believe I have paid my debt to society, served my incarceration term (approx 45 days in County Jail) and 2-years probation. However, the plaguing convictions noticeable in background

checks and inability to return to my rightful Second Amendment Rights to possess is a punishment that far exceeds my infractions.

Resume enclosed

Sincerely

Ralph A. Hutchinson

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7. I would like to get back to my life before I made my mistakes. I work hard, care for my children, and am still heavily involved with my community. Before I had children of my own, I mentored teens as a Big Brother. In LA, I mentored inner city LAUSD kids by taking them on sailing ships off Long Beach and teaching them about physics and marine life. I now run a nonprofit that provides financial scholarships to 20 female athletes who lack the economic funds to buy their equipment. I've also logged hundreds of volunteering hours with the United Nations Association, focusing on equality and the environment.

8. I regret the mistakes I made and have worked very hard to restore my life. The passage of HB 5 will allow myself and others like me to pursue career goals and move on to continue serving as a father and productive citizen of my community.