



Ohio Gun Owners

Ohio's Grassroots Gun Rights Organization
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2025

TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Chris Dorr, Ohio Gun Owners (OGO)

RE: Interested Party Testimony on H.B. 5

Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of Ohio Gun Owners, a grassroots organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of Second Amendment rights across our great state, I thank you for the opportunity to submit interested party testimony on House Bill 5.

Ohio Gun Owners is submitting this testimony as a neutral interested party. However, our neutrality is contingent and conditional.

While we recognize the intent behind H.B. 5—specifically its emphasis on repeat violent offenders and criminal accountability—we must clearly outline the provisions of the bill that are essential to maintain our organization's neutrality, and caution against any temptation to insert gun control measures into this legislation.

The Individual Is the Problem—Not the Tool

We commend the General Assembly for anchoring this bill in the principle that it is not firearms that cause violence, but the *individuals* who misuse them. This is a foundational truth for those who believe in constitutional liberties. H.B. 5 takes steps in the right direction by targeting repeat violent offenders and enhancing penalties for the criminal misuse of firearms—an approach that focuses on behavior, not constitutionally protected tools.

The bill's creation of the Repeat Offender Classification and its modifications to firearm specifications align with our longstanding position that Ohio's criminal justice system must hold *individuals* accountable for violent acts, not infringe upon the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Retention of Expungement Provisions Is Essential

Equally important is the bill's expanded expungement and sealing provisions for certain non-violent offenses. These reforms provide a pathway to redemption for Ohioans who have served their time and are seeking to reenter society as productive citizens. We support these measures and regard them as vital components that prevent the over-penalization of otherwise non-violent individuals.

Let us be clear: **any attempt to weaken or remove these expungement provisions would be met with strong opposition from Ohio Gun Owners.** Our organization believes that a balanced justice system must distinguish between repeat violent criminals and individuals who made non-violent mistakes in the past. The bill, as currently drafted, strikes that balance.

A Firm Warning Against Gun Control Additions

While we remain neutral on this legislation in its current form, let me be equally clear: **our neutrality will be revoked immediately should any gun control provisions be added to this legislation.** Any effort to restrict magazine capacity, introduce so-called "assault weapons" language, impose red flag laws, or otherwise infringe upon lawful gun ownership will transform this bill into a vehicle of

opposition from our organization and the hundreds of thousands of pro-gun Ohioans we represent.

Ohio Gun Owners has consistently opposed any legislative attempt to restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens, and we will oppose H.B. 5 if it is turned into a Trojan Horse for anti-gun agendas.

Conclusion

We understand and appreciate the committee's desire to reduce criminal violence in Ohio. We share that goal. But we must insist that the legislative solution stay focused on the root of the problem—**the violent offender**, not the firearm. So long as this bill stays true to that principle and preserves critical expungement protections, we will remain neutral.

But neutrality is not a guarantee. It is earned by the legislature's fidelity to constitutional principles and respect for the rights of Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Dorr" followed by a stylized flourish.

Chris Dorr, Executive Director
Ohio Gun Owners