

Ohio Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety Committee
Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 273
Daniel Bennett
Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition
October 15, 2025

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for Senate Bill 273.

My name is Daniel Bennett and I am the Chair of the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition and work to support the Life Side Ohio Suicide Prevention Campaign for firearms owners. Personally, I am an avid hunter and gun owner, getting my first shotgun, a single shot 20 gauge, as a Christmas present when I was 10 years old. I still have that gun today, along with many others.

Through my work with Life Side Ohio, I have had the opportunity to speak with more than 50 firearms retailers across our state. Many of them have shared stories of customers who have died by suicide. These retailers have expressed a desire to support suicide prevention efforts and a willingness to offer storage options. Unfortunately, those retailers, universally, have expressed concerns about liability when a firearm is returned. Senate Bill 273 would remove that liability, providing retailers and customers with a secure location to store their guns in times of crisis, when moving, or when leaving for an extended period like vacation or deployment.

Over 60% of our suicide deaths involve a firearm in Ohio. Senate Bill 273 can reduce that number. I know many people that have gone to a relative's house, worried about suicide, and gotten that loved one to agree to allow their guns to be stored off site. Now we have a parent, a sibling, or a close friend stressed about getting help for someone they care about, while trying to figure out where they are going to store those guns and when is it time to give them back. SB 273 would give that family a voluntary, secure option, for a set period of time, knowing those firearms will both be taken care of and returned in the near future.

Senate Bill 273 is supported by retailers, by the suicide prevention community, and by partners across the state of Ohio. Nothing is mandated through SB 273. Someone holding a Federal Firearms License in Ohio can choose to participate and can create their own terms for storage, without the fear of liability when the firearm is returned. As a coalition leader, a gun owner, and an advocate for suicide prevention I strongly support SB 273 and urge you to do the same.

I would be happy to try and answer any question you or the committee might have for me.

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