

Ohio Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety Committee
Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 273

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Empower Tusc
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 share my support for Senate Bill 273, the Keep Them Safe Act.

My name is Terri Miller, and I serve as the Coordinator for Empower Tusc and Chair of our County Suicide Prevention Committee. I'm also an Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist Assistant (OCP) and a QPR Trainer, working alongside schools, behavioral health agencies, and law enforcement to strengthen prevention and promote mental wellness in our community.

I support SB 273 because it will save lives and give Ohioans a voluntary, safe, and stigma-free option to temporarily store firearms outside the home.

Right now, there's no clear legal way for someone to safely store their firearm when they or a loved one are struggling, whether due to a mental health crisis, family conflict, or another situation. This bill changes that by creating a voluntary, lawful option to store firearms with law enforcement or licensed dealers.

As someone who works in suicide prevention, I know that time and space save lives. When a person in crisis has even a few minutes of distance from a firearm, their chance of surviving that moment goes up dramatically. SB 273 doesn't take away anyone's rights; it simply gives people another tool for safety and responsibility.

I also appreciate that this bill provides legal protection for law enforcement and dealers who want to participate, like a Good Samaritan law for firearm storage. It encourages people to do the right thing without fear of liability.

This legislation is about partnership, safety, and prevention. It builds bridges between public safety, the firearms community, and behavioral health, and that's exactly what we need more of in Ohio.

Thank you, Senator Koehler, for your leadership on this bill, and thank you all for your time and commitment to keeping Ohioans safe. I'd be happy to answer any questions.