

General Government Committee
Proponent Testimony by John Bruce Fowler, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and Members of the Committee

My name is John Bruce Fowler from Oak Harbor, Ottawa County, in Vice Chair Gavarone's Second District. I'm a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel of Military Police and subsequently a now retired Special Agent of the FAA. I graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in Political Science and in 2022 was elected the County Central Committeeman for the Salem 2 Precinct. I've kept active promoting youth shooting sports and safety for Scouting America, 4H and the Civilian Marksmanship Program. My wife and I have 4 grown children and 8 grandchildren, from a third grader to a college sophomore.

First, thank you Chair Roegner for actively processing S.J.R. No.3 in your committee, in this, the 136th Session of our Ohio legislature and thanks also to your fellow chair in the House doing the same. Sadly, the bill was heard in committee in the House in the 135th Session and in committee in the Senate in the 134th Session, but the same legislator who chaired both those committees did not hold timely hearings and left them unvoted upon at the end of each session. I'm told in politics that's called "letting them die", in the military we'd call it "gun-decking" i.e., hiding something below decks, out of sight. So again, thank you Chair Roegner and your committee for bringing this legislation to the forefront early in the session.

Standing on Lexington Green, on Concord's Bridge and on Boston Common two months ago with my wife and a grandson, thinking about that day 250 years ago and thinking about Private Jacob Bonham, my Revolutionary War grandfather, I was moved to think about this legislation. I thought about why the Founders put Article V into our Constitution and more importantly, why each state at the time ratified that Constitution and every state established since has agreed with it to join with us in these United States. The Founders were scholars who knew clearly the weaknesses of men and the historical procession of governments that had led to tyranny. "Well-intended" no doubt, for the "greater-good" surely, but those governments were still a threat to our God-given freedom and liberty at the heavy hand of some far removed, political collective.

Article V is the safety valve the Founders gave to we, the people, regardless of party. This legislation has been introduced in other states by members of both parties. All of us have suffered the heavy hand of life-time entrenched politicians, fiscal irresponsibility and devastating regulations not raised by wise legislators but emplaced administratively by unelected appointees. Now all of you have heard in committee the merits and protections the Founders wisely included and the further protections this legislation as written will provide. As we move to celebrate our 250th year of Independence, I ask that each of you vote to pass this legislation forward from this committee and then again once on the floor. If not now, when? If not you, who? Thank you for your attention, your vote and may God continue to bless Ohio and these United States for another 250 years.