Ohio Senate Local Government Committee
Senate Bill 278

Proponent Testimony of Jim Samuel
Buckeye Firearms Association
February 10, 2026

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent of Senate Bill 278.

My name is Jim Samuel, and I am the new Legislative Affairs Director for Buckeye Firearms Association (BFA). BFA is Ohio's premier organization dedicated to defending and advancing the Second Amendment rights of Ohio's 4 million gun owners.

We support the passage of SB278 because it seeks to curb the unlawful practice of city governments violating state law and infringing our citizen's Second Amendment rights.

Enacted in 2007, ORC Section 9.68 clearly states that cities cannot create their own gun laws based on home rule. Specifically, a political subdivision can not regulate firearms, their components, ammunition, or knives. The Ohio Supreme Court even ruled that the state's preemption law is valid, saying "R.C. 9.68 is a general law that displaces municipal firearm ordinances and does not unconstitutionally infringe on municipal home rule authority."

After repeated violations of this law by Ohio cities and multiple lawsuits, the legislature passed House Bill 228 (132nd G.A.) in 2019 to allow people to seek greater remedy through the courts. Despite the law, and despite losing multiple court cases, municipalities continue to ignore preemption law. The fact is, the small legal fees they must pay when they lose has not proven to be an effective deterrent.

SB278 adds teeth to the law. By inserting just five words into ORC 9.68, it expands the nature of damages an individual may seek against a municipal corporation to include punitive or exemplary damages. Cities have proven that they will never abide by this law until they can be held accountable in a way that exacts a significant price.

Madam Chair, this concludes my testimony. I want to thank you, along with Senators Koehler and Manchester, as well as Senator Johnson, for introducing SB278 and I would be happy to address any questions from you or members of the committee.