

Testimony on House Sub Bill 248

House Federalism Committee

November 30, 2020

Submitted by:

Ruth Lapp

Chair Becker, Vice Chair Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to House Sub Bill 248. My name is Ruth Lapp and I am writing you as a mother, grandmother, retired psychologist and university professor. I have lived and voted in Ohio for more than 50 years. I am opposed to this bill for many reasons but I will share only a few objections. House Sub Bill 248 will make us less safe.

As a psychologist, I know research shows that many 18-year-olds have not developed the mature judgment to handle the responsibility of carrying concealed weapons. As a university professor at a public university I would be unable to teach in a classroom where a student could be carrying a concealed weapon. There is no place for this in an academic setting where the students are learning to be adults and learning to handle liquor. I am thinking especially of fraternity hazing, but there can also be disputes about new ideas and classroom performance. This will lead to more not less gun violence. Young people today are committing suicide more often and having access to a lethal weapon makes for more tragedy.

With respect to the provisions about guns in school safety zones, I do not find that a school board is in any way qualified to evaluate who should be allowed to carry a weapon on school property. The degree of training and continued renewal of the skills necessary to safely have a weapon in the classroom would prevent teachers from focusing on their job, which is to provide a nurturing environment for learning.

Finally, I have been affected by at least 5 situations in the past 5 years involving murder. Never before in my 75 years have I known personally anyone affected by gun violence. One incident involved a robbery. A second I knew both the perpetrators and the victim and it was over a dispute. The third was a family member of a mass murderer. There is such heartache for these and all incidents involving gun violence, and this bill will only lead to more. Instead, legislators should be looking for common sense ways to reduce gun violence, such as requiring background checks on all gun sales. As I collected signatures advocating for universal background checks on guns last year, I found almost everyone supporting it and signing. This is what the citizens want.

This bill makes us less safe. Please vote against HB 248.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Lapp