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**Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 338**  
**Health Committee | Ohio House of Representatives | February 4, 2020**  
**Howie Beigelman, Executive Director, Ohio Jewish Communities**

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the Committee:

**Introduction**

I am here today representing Ohio Jewish Communities, the statewide government advocacy, public affairs, and community relations voice of Ohio's eight Jewish federations and their some 150 nonprofit agencies statewide. Those agencies include houses of worship, early childhood and community centers, K-12 chartered nonpublic schools, college campus services, agencies engaged in workforce development, mental and behavioral health, and senior programming at home, in the community and assisted living, skilled nursing, and hospice facilities. Those being served represent Ohioans of every faith, and of none; Jewish refers to our values, not to our clients.

**Background & Statement of Interest**

On their behalf we urge your support of HB 338 and we are grateful to Representative Greenspan for his leadership on this issue. As you are all aware, houses of worship, community centers, schools, and even senior facilities, as well as cause-based nonprofits of all types, have become prime targets for both sophisticated terrorist groups and more amateur, but no less deadly, lone wolf attacks.

No space is safe, no day is too holy, and no victim is off limits. For our Jewish community here in Ohio, that has meant attempted attacks on synagogues and plots on Jewish community centers. Nationally, these attacks have left a bloody trail of death and injury from Pittsburgh to San Diego, and have opened up new fronts in this war to include a kosher grocery store and attacks on rabbis during Sabbath services and on holidays such as Passover but also, most recently, in their private home during Hanukkah.

**Mentally Ill Individuals Pose a Unique Threat to Nonprofits in Our Community**

The Hanukkah attack is especially critical to legislation like this. The perpetrator of that mass stabbing attack was arrested hours later through diligent police work and the efforts of a citizen responder at the site who took down a license plate number. His attorney now claims he is too mentally unfit to stand trial for his crimes.

Working to diminish the chances such an attacker and others like him would have access to even deadlier weapons is critical. This legislation offers just such a way forward.

By expanding the legal offense of "having weapons while under disability" to include those convicted of domestic violence or of violating a protection order, by requiring immediate updates to the NCIC and LEADS databases, as well as by creating a new path for "potential risk protection orders," this will help keep deadly weapons out of the hands of those too unstable - and too dangerous - to possess them.

It balances these new efforts with significant due process requirements including requirements on action when such orders are cancelled or terminated.

Regarding the PRPO, there are several options for evaluation by a mental health professional to determine risk to the individual and the public. There too, the legislation builds in significant court procedures to ensure due process protections.

Finally, once the order is either terminated or cancelled, the legislation spells out requirements to comply with the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

**Conclusion**

We recognize there is much debate in the General Assembly and throughout Ohio on best next steps in public safety reform and in efforts to tamp down on violence and terrorist attacks. We believe that this legislation represents common ground on an achievable, measurable milestone to help keep Ohioans safer. We urge this committee to report this to the full House.

We are available for any questions.