

Testimony on House Bill 227

House Government and Oversight Committee

October 11, 2021

Submitted by: Mary Johnson

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 227.

My name is Mary Johnson. I am the mother of 2 daughters, and a scientist by profession. I am also the sister of an Ohio Police Lieutenant. I have lived in Ohio for 54 years and I am strongly opposed to House Bill Number 227 because it will make Ohio less safe for its citizens -- my family, my friends, my colleagues, and your constituents.

For those of you who are parents, and perhaps grandparents you know that you never, ever stop worrying about the safety of your children, even when they are adults as are my daughters. This bill would endanger all Ohioans by allowing criminals to obtain a concealed weapons license and allow people to conceal carry without any training in handguns or background checks. This is akin to allowing anyone to drive a car without a license, even if they have had their license revoked due to multiple DUIs or other serious issues. I've often heard it said that guns don't kill people, people do. To me this means we must make sure that criminals and those intending harm to themselves, and others are not able to carry concealed handguns.

Supporters of House Bill Number 227 claim that this bill will make Ohio safer for everyone. I've even heard them remark that other states that have already adopted similar legislation, "aren't seeing their streets running with blood." What kind of standard is that? As a scientist I must ask, "What are the facts relating to policy and gun violence?" Claims and opinions cannot form the basis for a policy that impacts every resident and visitor to Ohio, every single day, at home, work and at play. Research from the Journal of Empirical Legal Studies in 2019 found that "right to carry" laws are associated with a [13% to 15% higher aggregate violent crime rate 10 years after adoption](#). Recent studies have also shown that states with more permissive concealed carry laws have higher rates of gun homicides than states with regulations that provide law enforcement agencies the discretion to deny CCW licenses.

As the sister of an Ohio Police Lieutenant, I am also afraid for my brother's safety. That's because this bill is hostile to police and would harm the public's safety, because:

- It would dangerously eliminate the current responsibility of civilians carrying a concealed weapon to promptly notify police when stopped if they are carrying a concealed weapon.
- By eliminating any requirement for a concealed handgun license, this bill would make it impossible for police to determine if a person with a concealed gun was legally carrying it, and thus could result in police unknowingly letting people illegally carrying concealed guns continue to carry them.
- It would prohibit police from taking into account whether a person was carrying a concealed gun in determining whether the police should question or temporarily detain that individual and thereby shackle the police in keeping Ohioans safe.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Mary Johnson