

House Government Oversight Committee  
Opposition Testimony HB 227

Submitted by:  
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Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney and committee members:

I am a gun owner, because I live in a rural area. I grew up around guns, because many people in my family were in the military, or law enforcement, and because we lived in a rural area at the far end of the county so, the Sheriff was a good 45 minutes away. I am grateful I have not had to use my hunting rifle for personal protection, and hope that day never comes. Being a gun owner is a serious responsibility, and one that I do not take lightly. These are not "toys"-- and when these tools are in the hands of dangerous people, it is easy to see how much can go wrong and with such lethal results. Furthermore, as someone who has worked in advocacy and prevention programs for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, I am deeply concerned about the lunacy the Ohio legislature is now proposing with this permitless carry nonsense. Have you all taken leave of your senses? Even law enforcement officers and the most strident pro 2A people I know think that permitless carry is a bad idea. I think that considering this legislation renders each and every last one of you UNFIT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE because it shows such poor judgement. Shame on you for making me come up here and tell you straight up, using my government name, that you are a disgrace to public safety.

I am writing as a concerned citizen in opposition to HB227 which would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. Ohioans have heard legislators tell us time and again that gun laws only penalize law-abiding citizens. If this is the case, then there is no reason to change who may obtain a CCW license. We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership. Widening the net of who can carry concealed weapons, when gun violence is increasing in our state, is not a way to diminish gun violence and keep our communities safe. In addition to allowing certain people who now cannot obtain a concealed handgun license to carry one even if they were trained in the use of guns, HB227 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and sneak up on others. Handguns require more skill to use properly than a car and are at least as lethal. According to The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (June 3, 2020), there were 38,680 fatalities from car crashes. Roughly 35,000 people are killed by guns every year. Yet prior to obtaining a driver's license, Ohio law includes classroom time, on the road practice with an instructor, 50 hours of on the road experience with a licensed citizen as well as a written test and driving exam, over a minimum of six months. I've not heard of any legislation changing the requirement of obtaining a driver's license to zero hours and no exams. And that's for the sake of safety on the road. Legislation regarding concealed carry and who may obtain a license should be about safety. Not about rushing to put guns in the hands of more citizens and criminals. HB227 would also restrict the ability of police to enforce the law regarding carrying concealed handguns, by limiting the questioning of such people by police. We need laws that will support and protect law enforcement so they can do their job without adding more potential for gun violence during routine traffic stops, etc. SB227 negatively impacts the safety of citizens and law enforcement. In Ohio, we need laws that will keep people safe. Changing the restrictions on who can obtain a CCW and then allowing anyone to carry is not the way. I ask you to stop HB227 from going any further in our legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.