

Government Oversight Committee
Opposition Testimony to HB 227
Submitted by Lorrie Levengood
10/11/2021

Dear Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chairman White, Ranking Member Sweeney and committee members, thank you for allowing me to testify on this bill.

I am writing in regards to HB 227, which I strongly oppose. My name is Lorrie Levengood. I have taught in Ohio schools for 34 years as an intervention specialist. I am deeply distressed that this bill would eliminate safety training requirements, background checks and permitting for those who carry loaded handguns in public places. This will put more Ohio families, including children, in danger as they go about the daily activities of working, shopping, eating out, etc.

More guns in the hands of untrained people, or people with violent criminal backgrounds, will hardly make us safer. We already have more guns in our country than we have people. Yet gun deaths just keep going up. Close to 40, 000 Americans die from gun violence every year. Ohio, especially, is experiencing a gun violence epidemic. According to the Gifford Law Center, more than 1,450 Ohioans die from gun violence each year and many more are injured. Ohio's gun death rate is growing much faster than most other states! The gun death rate in our state increased 34% from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 17% increase nationwide. This represents an increase of 430 gun deaths over this period in Ohio. (CDC, Everytown.org). A recent study by Boston University found that states without permits and background checks had a 15% higher homicide rate than states with such provisions.

The New York City Police Department reported that even their highly trained officers see their ability to shoot accurately decrease significantly when engaged in gunfights with perpetrators. Putting more guns in our community in the hands of untrained people will create more chaos during a shooting incident, with more innocent people being killed or injured. It will make it even harder for law enforcement to safely respond to shooting incidents, which is one reason the Ohio Assoc. of Chiefs of Police opposes such bills. It is already nerve wracking to think that someone next to us may be infectious with COVID or a new variant, now we will have to worry even more about being caught in the middle of a "shoot out".

Please use common sense and vote “No” on HB 227.

Thank you,
Lorrie Levensgood