

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to present my written testimony. I oppose HB 227 because it would eliminate Ohio's concealed handgun license requirement and allow people to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public without a permit or safety training, reversing existing Ohio law (ORC 2923.125(B)(3), (G)). This is a dangerous bill, it does not keep Ohioans safe and I urge you to vote against.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Kathryn Knue Przywara. I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and I have lived in the Montgomery/Symmes Township area since 1988. My husband and I raised our two sons in Ohio and we are now the proud grandparents of two young grandsons. I am a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University. I am currently licensed to practice law in Ohio and the District of Columbia. After practicing law for over approximately 35 years, I retired at the end of 2019. My husband and I are the children of parents who owned small, family-run businesses in the small communities where we were raised. I am a reliable voter and common-sense gun reforms that reduce gun violence are important voting issues for me and my family.

At the outset, let me point out that the right to bear arms is not absolute. *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008). Moreover, the Ohio Supreme Court has held that there is no constitutional right to carry a concealed, obscured weapon. *Klein v. Leis*, 99 Ohio St. 3d 537, 795 N.E.2d 633 (2003).

HB 227 would endanger Ohioans for several reasons. For example, it would eliminate the requirement to obtain a license in order to carry a concealed handgun or weapon. It also would expand who can carry a concealed weapon to include certain criminals and people charged with or convicted of crimes who cannot currently obtain a concealed carry license.

In fact, this bill as currently written is hostile to police. It would effectively limit the current responsibility of civilians carrying a concealed weapon to promptly notify police when stopped that they are carrying. This makes it virtually impossible for police to determine whether the person with the concealed gun is actually legally carrying it. It also severely hampers law enforcement's efforts to prevent and/or reduce the use of illegal firearms. In effect, police will no longer be able to factor the presence a concealed weapon in deciding whether to question or temporarily detain an individual. It would seem that this aspect of the bill would also make law enforcement more apprehensive when conducting traffic stops. They will always have a concern that the vehicle occupants in an ordinary traffic stop are carrying concealed weapons and the occupants will have no duty to inform the police officer. This uneasiness could also potentially result in unnecessary uses of lethal force by law enforcement.

HB 227 would also permit Ohioans to carry concealed weapons without any training in the use of and safe-handling of handguns. The improper handling of a loaded weapon

can result in harm to either the gun owner or innocent bystanders. The overwhelming majority of Americans believe a person should get a permit before carrying a concealed handgun in public. See Strategies 360 Survey, March 2015.

I have concerns that legitimizing permitless concealed carry would result in vigilantism and more gun violence. In fact, it appears in looking broadly at the states that have enacted permitless concealed carry laws that there is an increase in gun violence and that is the last thing Ohio needs now. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/permitless-carry-carrying-a-concealed-gun-in-public-with-no-permit-and-no-training/>. Last year was the deadliest gun violence year in decades and 2021, so far, is worse. See “2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. So far, 2021 is worse.”, *Washington Post*, June 14, 2021. “Through the first five months of 2021, gunfire killed more than 8,100 people in the United States, about 54 lives lost per day, according to a Washington Post analysis of data from the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research organization. That’s more than the average toll during the same period of the previous six years.” *Id.* “In Ohio, the rate of gun deaths increased 34% from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 17% increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased 28% and gun homicides increased 43%, compared to a 24% increase and 26% increase nationwide, respectively.” <https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Gun-Violence-in-Ohio-2.9.2021.pdf>. Moreover, gun sales are soaring, especially in Ohio. “An arms Race in America: Gun Buying Spiked During the Pandemic. It’s Still Up.” May 29, 2021, *The New York Times*; <https://www.citybeat.com/news/blog/21149309/ohio-bought-a-hell-of-a-lot-of-guns-in-2020-apparently> (Feb. 25, 2021).

As the children of small business owners, my husband and I grew up working in our family businesses. Based on that experience, we recognize that allowing permitless carry will result in increased burden, risk and expense to Ohio businesses. Many businesses may choose to provide a family-friendly atmosphere without the presence of firearms and other weapons and, as the proposed legislation requires, post signs stating that firearms and weapons are not allowed. These businesses will be faced with responsibility of monitoring the policy and confronting armed individuals in places of business. The risk for escalation increases when loaded firearms are present. We cannot imagine what we would have done when we were younger working in our family businesses if we had encountered that situation. For those businesses that allow the presence of firearms or weapons, security guards and others charged with protecting the business may be more inclined to use their firearms when they see the presence of a weapon on a customer.

My husband and youngest son, both structural engineers, are frequently at construction sites where tempers can flare. Introduce a concealed, loaded handgun or other weapon to the situation, especially when the individual with the gun has no training, and the situation can become lethal. In fact, as a young engineer, my husband experienced a situation where an individual pulled a loaded handgun on him and his co-workers at a construction site. While they were able to deescalate the situation and retreat without shots being fired, they had to enlist the assistance of local law enforcement to accompany them back to the site so they could do their jobs.

It is obvious that this bill does not make our state safer and it is not what Ohioans want. According to a March 2016 survey, 90% of Ohio voters support requiring a permit to carry a concealed handgun in public. Survey USA Survey, March 2016. Looking more broadly at surveys covering the entire country, 88% of Americans support getting a permit before carrying a concealed gun in public, and 80% of “gun owners, non-gun owners, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents agree that high safety standards are critical in issuing concealed carry permits.” <https://everytownresearch.org/report/permitless-carry-carrying-a-concealed-gun-in-public-with-no-permit-and-no-training/>.

This bill would be dangerous for Ohio citizens, law enforcement and businesses. I urge you to discontinue hearings on HB 227. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn Knue Przywara