

Testimony on House Bill 227
House Government Oversight Committee
Submitted by Shannon Hanf
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Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White and Ranking Member Sweeney: 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. SB215 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. Finally, SB227 would make it more difficult for prosecutors to convict people who kill others with guns, by giving defendants the power to force prosecutors to present their case before they have gathered all the evidence. HB227 negatively impacts the safety of citizens, law enforcement and the capacity of prosecutors to effectively do their job because of politics. 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.