

**INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030



**NRA**

October 13, 2021

House Government Oversight Committee

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Wilkin and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee:

My name is John Weber and I represent the National Rifle Association. I am here today to speak about House Bill 277 and the NRA's support of this important piece of legislation. On behalf of our members in Ohio, I want to thank the committee for its consideration of this important legislation.

My goal today is to provide you with some of the facts around constitutional carry. I also hope to provide you with some data from other states that have opted for this policy. Additionally, I will discuss the misinformation that is circulating about this issue.

I want to go through a few facts about what constitutional carry is and what is not:

**First:** This is not a new or uncommon policy. Nearly two thirds of US states (31) allow constitutional open carry and twenty-one allow concealed constitutional carry. In most of the country law-abiding citizens can carry a firearm for self-protection without government permission and having to pay a fee. Ohio's current system is setup as a privilege, not a right. Constitutional carry simply allows a person who is otherwise legally able to possess and carry a firearm to do so in a manner of their choosing, often in a discrete fashion. Again, this is not a new or uncommon policy.

**Secondly:** Constitutional carry will not allow prohibited persons to carry or buy guns. There are a number of misconceptions about constitutional carry, some accidental and some purposely placed. Constitutional carry does not change prohibited person laws or any law governing the misuse of a firearm to include illegal brandishing, discharge, or threatening, among others. It does not affect when force may be used in defense of self or others.

It does not change who can legally purchase a firearm. Felons, violent criminals, drug users, and those adjudicated mentally defective still cannot go into a store and purchase a firearm. Anyone currently prohibited from purchasing a firearm under Ohio or Federal law will still be prohibited from purchasing or carrying a firearm.

Constitutional carry gives law abiding people better options for self-defense. Law abiding citizens are the only individuals currently obtaining licenses to carry a concealed firearm. Allowing these individuals to carry concealed, without a license, will not change the fact that they are law abiding.

This policy is for the law abiding citizen who should not have to jump through governmental hoops to exercise a natural, constitutional right.

**Third:** States enacting constitutional carry legislation do not devolve into the Wild West. Opponents in every state claim that if constitutional carry is enacted that it is going to be the end of days and that lawlessness and killing will escalate to epic proportions. These claims are simply not true.

FBI crime data for states that have had constitutional carry in effect with available crime data before and after enactment illustrate that there has been no negative impact on public safety. The five states which we have analyzed are Alaska, Arizona, Wyoming, Kansas and Maine.

**Fourth:** People still apply for and pay for permits. The evidence from states who have enacted this policy have actually seen an increase over time in their permits. Arizona, for example, saw a more than 40% increase in issued permits in the years following adoption of constitutional carry.

The current Ohio permitting system will remain in place for those still wanting to obtain a permit for reciprocity with other states.

Training programs will still be as readily available as they are today for those who wish to obtain instruction.

**Fifth:** Criminals already carry concealed firearms without regard for the law. This legislation is not for them. It simply puts law-abiding Ohioans on equal footing.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the second amendment is clear and concise and guarantees the freedom and right to bear arms. It is time that we get back to trusting the citizens of this state with the rights guaranteed to them through the second amendment. I strongly urge passage of House Bill 227.

Sincerely,



John Weber  
State Director  
NRA-ILA

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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