



Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

October 14, 2021

Testimony in Opposition to HB 227

Submitted by Toby Hoover for the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence

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

Thank you for listening to Ohioans on this very important issue.

This bill is not about guns or defense or rights. It is about fear and government. The rhetoric around guns sells fear and when you add anger and access to weapons there are lives lost. Putting people in our public spaces who are suspicious of everyone and believe that they will need to defend themselves any minute is a crisis waiting to happen.

Every year there are more lives lost in Ohio because of gun violence. Since CCW passed in 2004, we have seen the slippery slope of the gun lobby to weaken everything that was promised if they could just carry weapons in public. Now the ultimate privilege – no permit at all, no training, no background check for a license.

In Ohio there were 934 gun deaths in 2003, CCW passed in 2004 and now most years over 1,500 lives are lost. Why would we consider making it easier to carry lethal weapons?

Suicides average 60% of the firearm deaths in Ohio each year and studies support that many decisions are made and carried out spontaneously. Having a lethal weapon immediately accessible increases the chances of a fatality (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/risk/>), (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/case-fatality/>).

Unfortunately, there is also an acceptance that there are only 'good guys' and 'bad guys' in our country and that each of them will always behave that way. This allows the conclusion that somehow we will be able to recognize the 'bad guys' within a weak system that will not be checking their background or have any oversight on the permitless carriers' behavior.

Each day we see that someone that everyone considered a good person resort to violence on their families and friends. Instead of looking at violence as the public health crisis that it is, this bill allows more people to carry hidden loaded weapons in public as an answer to their fears and fantasies.

HB 227 will allow people over the age of 21 to carry hidden loaded weapons in public without a permit or license. Ohioans can also carry loaded weapons openly without a permit. The gun owners that now want to carry concealed readily admit that they know the general public doesn't approve of their behavior so that mandates them covering their firearms so they are hidden.

We note that the bill also changes the name to concealed weapons rather than handguns. That in itself is a move forward to admit they are designed to be weapons.

Carrying was put into law in 2004 with the claim from the pro-gun forces that Ohioans would be the best trained, have background checks performed by their sheriffs, and have a competency certification after taking a class on the rules, laws and some proficiency. The claim was that the permit holders were the

most law abiding in the state.

HB 227 will prevent any research or oversight on the people carrying loaded weapons because there will be no records. How will law enforcement revoke or suspend the carrying of unlicensed carriers? The calling card for gun owners that want to carry is that they are the 'good' guys. We suggest everyone is a good guy until they're not.

With no permits or records there will be **no oversight** or conclusions on the behaviors or crimes by people that carry weapons in public.

The claim of the right to carry loaded weapons is a 'God Given Right's is the cry of fearful men that ignore the right and gift of life. Sponsors and proponents also ignore that our country gave us the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Hiding behind laws that arm us against one another promotes the culture of violence and fear. Defending the second amendment is an excuse as the courts have ruled to allow having a gun **in your home and that the second amendment is not absolute.**

We ask you to consider all Ohioans and not just the minority that want to be armed at all times. There are a lot of references to gun owner rights, but they seem to ignore everyone's right to life and the freedom from gun violence.

On a personal note, I am a survivor of a gun violence victim and I can speak to the horror of violence and the lifelong scars it causes. I hear some claim that this bill will make it easier for those that can't afford competency and safety classes even though they can afford a gun. I hear that it is inconvenient for some to have to take time and money to be able to carry a gun in public and we should make it easier for them. I admit that I react to anyone's claim of inconvenience because I can tell you how inconvenient it is to be a widow at the age of 30 with two children ages 4 & 8 because of the easy access to guns.

I also know what it is like to not have the money to do things. I know what it is like to have found out just what this culture of violence is about. I don't wish it on anyone. Fear is controlling our lives and this bill is encouraging it by confirming that we all need to be at the ready to defend ourselves at all times. HB 227 is another step in the wrong direction. More people playing judge and jury and then using lethal force is something that is weakening not cultivating a peaceful society.

Other states are moving forward, we are not. Other countries put us to shame. They put their citizens first before the love of guns.

This bill is addressing a problem that does not exist. We would all be better to address the problem of gun violence with research, admit that it is a public health problem and honor the safety of our families.

Thank you for your consideration.

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