

House Government Oversight Committee
Senate Bill 185 Testimony March 10, 2022

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

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence Testimony opposing SB 185

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence – OCAGV – opposes this bill for a number of reasons. First, to call firearm businesses “essential” in an emergency is insulting to health professionals and the many essential workers that were trying to save our families’ lives.

Secondly, years ago the Ohio state legislature decided that local firearm laws could not be enforced.

Now, SB 185 claims to know what is life sustaining during an emergency. It ties the hands of local government by not allowing them to respond, protects all gun related activities and suspends rules on concealed carry. While protecting guns and their owners, SB 185 gives a special privilege to “any person, group, or entity adversely affected by any manner of law enacted or enforced in violation of the bill may file an action for damages, injunctive relief, declaratory relief, or other appropriate redress.”

This encourages anyone that does not want to be restricted in any way to look for a way to file damages if they don’t have complete freedom to decide the law on their firearms. SB 185 then goes on to punish political subdivisions if they try to prohibit the sale, dispensing, or transportation of firearms into areas that are cordoned off during mob or riot activity.

What this bill does not address is who will decide when it is a “mob” or “riot.” When local government cordons off an area, why would a person arm themselves to enter except to see themselves as law enforcement? We have seen those actions (Kyle Rittenhouse in Kenosha) and the results were loss of life.

Very serious questions arise concerning when it can be decided if it is a riot or mob. We don’t see any provisions in the bill that protect those exercising their right to a peaceful law abiding protest. If a group gathers, but outsiders disagree with their issue or action (obviously not if the law is being broken), can they declare it a danger to themselves and then enter while armed and “stand their ground?”

This bill has the potential to discriminate against anyone or group that is protecting their own rights.

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence respectfully asks that you vote no on this bill to respect all Ohioans and experts, and not just the gun lobby.

Thank you.

Toby Hoover, Gun Violence Survivor and OCAGV Founder

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence www.ohioceasefire.org info@ohioceasefire.org
OCAGV is a statewide organization working for the freedom from gun deaths and injuries.