



Buckeye Firearms Association

Testimony of Rob Sexton

On behalf of Buckeye Firearms Association

Before the House Ways and Means Committee

December 6th, 2021

Chairman Merrin, members of the House Ways and Means Committee, I am Rob Sexton, the Legislative Affairs Director for Buckeye Firearms Association. BFA is civil rights organization that has been defending and advancing the rights of over 4 million Ohio citizens for more than 15 years, with a long and proven record of changing laws for the better.

I am here to offer brief testimony for House Bill 471. We are grateful to Representative Cutrona for his advocacy for gunowners across our state. My testimony will be brief because this bill is straight forward, and the solution similarly so as well. HB 471 would eliminate Ohio's taxation of one of our key freedoms included in the Bill of Rights. Over decades, Ohio, like many other states created a taxation system to finance its ever-expanding government footprint. Part of this expansion included the creation of a sales tax by which peoples' already taxed income would be taxed a second time when they actually used their own money to purchase goods and services.

The General Assembly seemed to recognize that some things should be off limits from such double taxation, which resulted most food and prescription drugs being exempt from sales tax. However, inexplicably, the legislature at that time thought it perhaps fair, wise and prudent to tax one of America's and Ohio's fundamental freedoms...our right to keep and bear arms.

The Second Amendment to the U.S Constitution and Article 1 Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution guarantees our right to firearms. As far as we can tell, it is the only item in the Bill of Rights that is taxed when people exercise their constitutional rights. People use firearms to protect themselves and their families. They use firearms to hunt for food. These are life preserving liberties, and similar to life saving drugs, should not be subject to sales tax.

For example, if a women needs to buy a firearm because she fears her former partner will kill her now that she has taken out a restraining order against him, she will have to pay sales tax on that firearm? At the same time, when government itself, in the form of our law enforcement agencies and military, does not? Why is it that government is so often exempt from the rules it foists on the rest of us?

A 7.5% tax is a significant tax on someone who needs a firearm. If you could purchase a car on a discount that size, you'd surely go to the outlet where you could find that savings. And that is exactly what some gun buyers do when they take their purchases elsewhere. Ohio's unfair firearms tax provides a disincentive for people to do business with retailers right here in Ohio. Perhaps that didn't resonate when this law was enacted, but in today's internet buyer's world, it is easy not to have to buy here in Ohio. Our law takes business away from Ohio companies, which employ thousands of Ohioans.

Any way you look at it, Ohio's Firearms Sales Tax is wrong headed, and House Bill 471 gives you all an opportunity to fix the problem. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

.