



Ohio Gun Owners

Ohio's Grassroots Gun Rights Organization
3195 Dayton-Xenia Road, #900-306
Beavercreek, OH 45434

Memorandum of Support

DATE: October 5, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Ohio Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

FROM: Rob Knisley, Political Director, Ohio Gun Owners, and our members and supporters across Ohio

RE: Support for Senate Bill 215

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Thomas, on behalf of Ohio Gun Owners and the moms, dads, grandparents, aunts and uncles that are our members and supporters who are busy working today and cannot afford to be here, and also for the future generations that are counting on us today to do the hard work of defending their freedoms as well, I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 215, introduced by Senator and Vice Chairman Terry Johnson.

Twenty-one states now have some version of Constitutional Carry, and this year alone under the Joe Biden Administration, FIVE additional states have passed this law.

It is high time the Ohio General Assembly take this bill up and pass it - it's embarrassing that we have not done so already considering that this legislation has been introduced in some form in the General Assembly for over 20 years.

Let me just quickly summarize our support for this beautiful piece of legislation.

Senate Bill 215 does not eliminate the current licensing system, it simply makes it optional for those who still wish for one for purposes of reciprocity.

The bill simply allows Ohioans who are otherwise not prohibited from owning or carrying weapons and recognizes their right to 'keep and bear arms' by taking their handgun, that they can already carry openly, and putting a coat over it without having to beg for government permission first or become a felon for doing so.

It makes it legal for lawful people to carry handguns in vehicles without being forced to do what no criminal does, which is either disarm or make sure their thug friends carefully stow away their guns.

And it removes the 'duty-to-notify' law in Ohio which has always been confusing and cause for contention between everyday citizens exercising their rights and law enforcement officers during encounters.

Additionally, this bill improves Ohio's self-defense law by granting Ohioans who have used a firearm in self-defense, defense of another, or defending their property the right to a pre-trial immunity hearing.

This is something that Ohio Gun Owners has been pushing for years, and something that our organization supports.

The mere fact of acting justly in self-defense should not result in dragging folks who used defensive force in accordance with Ohio law through the mud, costing them valuable time and resources just because some anti-gun prosecutor wants to make a few bucks off of the situation.

And besides, if someone is found to have acted unlawfully in their use of force, the prosecution should have no problem overcoming the standard of proof the law requires and going to a full trial.

While there are small changes that we would like to see, all in all, this is a great, common-sense piece of gun legislation that will save lives, and it wipes infringements off the books by getting government out of the rights-regulation business.

But while I have the opportunity, I'd also like to dispel some rumors and fake news you'll probably hear about this bill in the very near future.

You're likely going to hear opposition testimony from political law-enforcement groups or their associations.

They'll probably come in here and tell you that there will be blood in the streets, how this will endanger their officers and how this is just horrible policy.

But their testimony isn't true and it never reflected reality.

A year after our neighbors in West Virginia passed it in 2015, WV State Police Spokesman Lt. Michael Baylous described the impact Constitutional Carry had on their state:

"When comparing the raw data from 2015 and 2016, there does not appear to be an overall significant difference in the number of violent crimes committed with firearms. Some counties experienced an increase in gun-related incidents, while others experienced a decrease."

That was West Virginia. Let's look at Idaho.

A July 1, 2017 article in Washington state's *Spokesman-Review* covered this issue of what happened in Idaho after they passed Constitutional Carry.

The article states that before Constitutional Carry passed in Idaho, gun-control groups and political law-enforcement organizations predicted dire warnings about increasing violent crime rates.

But it just never happened.

Nez Perce County Sheriff Joe Rodrigues stated that "nothing has changed," and he also noted that the number of residents applying for concealed carry permits hadn't dropped, either.

In most states where we've seen this bill passed, the chief of police associations are usually the most vocal opponents of 2nd Amendment rights, but this article went on to state that even the Idaho Chiefs of Police Association agreed that Constitutional Carry had not resulted in an increase in crime.

The objections to Constitutional Carry just aren't based in reality.

And they never have been.

We've heard these howls and screams against the restoration of Constitutional 2nd Amendment rights before, when concealed carry was sweeping America during the 1990's and 2000's.

Those warnings were wrong then, and they're wrong now, because what they really were then and really are now simply disguised attacks on the 2nd Amendment launched to try to stop and block the wonderful restoration of freedom that these bills represent.

Another objection you'll hear from the opponents of freedom and our right to defend ourselves is that "the data supports the gun-control argument."

But that isn't true, either.

Turkey established gun-control in 1911. From 1915 to 1917, 1.5 million Armenians were exterminated in the Armenian Genocide.

The Soviet Union established gun-control in 1929. Between 1929-1953, nearly 20 million dissidents were exterminated.

China established gun-control in 1935. Between 1948-1952, 20 million political dissidents were exterminated.

Guatemala established gun-control in 1964. Between 1964-1981, 100,000 Mayan Indians were rounded up and exterminated.

Uganda established gun-control in 1970. Between 1971-1979, 300,000 Christians rounded up and exterminated.

Cambodia established gun-control in 1956. Between 1975-1977, 1 million educated people were rounded up and exterminated.

You see, our insistence that this committee and this general assembly pass this bill isn't because we demand the right of human self-defense exclusively because of killers, rapists, gangbangers, thugs, rioters, looters or any other violent criminal.

The fact of the matter is that we insist on our Right to Keep and Bear Arms because governments are the biggest killers of innocent people in human history.

A lot of gun-control activists and enemies of self-defense point at Australia and New Zealand as examples of policies America should implement.

But the governments of Australia and New Zealand haven't started slaughtering them, yet.

And that is why our God-given right to self-defense is enshrined in the Bill of Rights and our Ohio Constitution in the first place.

They weren't written so that we can hunt deer. They weren't even written so that we can exclusively always defend ourselves against thugs and murderers.

The 2nd Amendment and Article 1 Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution are about protecting people like me and people like innocent Ohio Gun

Owners members and supporters from tyrannical governments that decide they want to commit genocide.

So, the people who quote Australia and New Zealand statistics are very short-sighted, and forget the horrifying lessons I already mentioned.

Another thing I'd like to address before I wrap this up are the "studies" you'll be hearing from the opponents of freedom and our right to defend ourselves.

When you take a look at the numbers being spouted, you'll find that virtually every one of them are authored by biased, agenda-driven "centers" or "think tanks" being funded by very worst enemies of American freedom today, people like Michael Bloomberg and George Soros.

These studies love to mix a little truth with a lot of fiction in order to support their own agenda.

Let's take a look at Missouri as an example.

Generally, the FBI's annual violent crime report stats on their surface are favorable towards the expansion of firearms rights, especially when considered over the long-term.

But the reporting of raw numbers, in and of themselves, does not necessarily show a direct, causal relationship - as so many proponents of mandatory masking have said over the last year, "correlation does not equal causation."

Missouri passed Constitutional Carry in 2016 and the law went into effect in January of 2017.

In fact, we are quite proud of that. Ohio Gun Owners' Director, Chris Dorr, was there in 2016 as the legislative liaison to the Missouri legislature for the Missouri Firearms Coalition, working on then-Representative Eric Burlison's bill.

2017's numbers, according to the studies you'll hear by the opponents of freedom and this bill, were higher than 2016's numbers, and they suggest this as "evidence" as to why we shouldn't pass Constitutional Carry here in Ohio.

But the honest truth you'll never hear from these studies or their adherents is that St Louis is a very violent city, often the most violent in America. The mayor of St Louis is a complete buffoon and most of the city council espouses radical gun-control and completely defunding the police, and the violent crime rates that result are so bad that it makes the entire state's crime rate problems skew!

In fact, if you watch the television reports out of St Louis you'll see that they've had massive violent crime problems for many years, but none of those reports have ever said that the problem was caused because the state removed the requirement for gun owners to get a CHL

to carry firearms and that because they had removed that requirement for a CHL a lot of gun owners had all of a sudden become killers!

The fact is, when a whole city is having massive violent crime rate problems it shows that there is a hearts and minds problem in that city, probably originating in their terrible government-run school system - NOT a problem caused by the rest of the state's gun-owner community.

This bill is a great bill. It is common sense. Thank you for bringing it forward. It is high time for it. It is past time for it, and the gun voters who elected the current legislature deserve to have these infringements wiped off the books.

I'd be happy to entertain any questions you might have!