

## **Testimony on Senate Bill 215**

### **Opposition**

Veterans and Public Safety Committee

December 14, 2021

Submitted by:

Leah Bunck, LSW

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, and Ranking Member THomas, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 215. I am writing to you today as a mother of two, spouse of a teacher who was involved in a school shooting, voter, and social worker. I am proud to be an Ohioan, and will continue to use my voice for my family and community. Sadly, I am unable to take off work to testify in person, as I work for Meals-on-Wheels and this is a very busy time of year. I have made sure I took time to submit opposition though, because this is such a dangerous law! As I have mentioned in previous testimony for the House version, I continue to oppose this bill because it is a danger to all Ohians and will lead to more violence, injury, and even deaths for the community and for gun owners.

I am lucky enough to be engaged in a volunteer group that helps active citizens follow legislation that can deeply impact the safety of my children and family. It is hard to juggle a full time job, family, and constant changes in the Ohio legislature. I find it hard to believe that a political party and elected officials who are strong proponents of families consistently try to quickly push through gun legislation without allowing the proper time for constituents to review and share their thoughts and concerns about these dangerous bills. I urge you to allow more time for citizens to testify and voice their opinion on this bill.

More specifically to this bill, I have family members who own firearms, but I am proud of them because they have taken all the steps to ensure they are trained and responsible gun owners. This bill would encourage more people to own guns and allow them to elect out of training that is important for the safety of our children and families, but also so important for the gun owner. This legislation would also expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. I think it is sad and dangerous that this committee would

consider a bill that would encourage less training, easier access for criminals to overall dangerous practices for gun owners.

I live in fear for myself and all the other parents that we will find ourselves in the home or in public with someone who doesn't know how to properly store or use their gun. I am confident that without training there will be more injury and even deaths from unwanted discharges, inadequate storage, and limited education on even how to use the gun. Again, this is a danger to our children, community, and the gun owner themselves. I know someone who died from an accidental discharge. I can only imagine how this dangerous bill would increase these occurrences when the gun owner has little to no training to prevent such discharges.

I highly encourage this committee to rethink the proposal of this bill, and prioritize the important things for Ohioans- keeping them safe, that include sensible gun owners. Legislation like SB 215 does not belong in our state and I encourage you to vote against this bill and use more time focusing on what really matters in our state and for your constituents.

Respectfully,

Leah Bunck, MSW, LSW