

Testimony on Senate Bill 215

Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Sen. Frank Hoagland, Chair

Sen. Terry Johnson, Vice Chair

Sen. Cecil Thomas, Ranking Member

Submitted by: Mark Gooch

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today. My name is Mark Gooch and I am speaking to you today as a concerned private citizen and father from Wooster, Ohio. I'm testifying in opposition to SB 215. While some of what I have to say today may not be new to you, part of my reason for testifying is to demonstrate one more Ohioan who seeks to make our state safer from gun violence by opposing this dangerous, anti-police legislation.

I'll start with some statistics. On average about 100 Americans are killed each day by guns.¹ 80% of Americans are opposed to concealed carry without a permit and training, including 65% of Republicans.² I remembered a statistic of an average 15% increase in gun homicides in states after they removed the permit requirement for concealed carry of handguns. When I went looking for a source for that statistic, I found a couple of statistics that were even more startling to me. Between 2003 when Alaska eliminated the permit requirement for

¹ "Gun Violence in America," EverytownResearch.org, July 19, 2018, <https://everytownresearch.org/gun-violence-america/>.

² "Key Facts about Americans and Guns," Pew Research Center, September 13, 2021, <https://pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/09/13/key-facts-about-americans-and-guns/>.

concealed carry and 2017, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm increased 106%. After Arizona dropped concealed carry permits in 2010, by 2017 aggravated assaults with firearms increased by 39%.³ I did find that statistic in a National Bureau of Economic Research report. It stated: “Our synthetic control approach also strongly confirms that RTC [right to carry] laws are associated with 13-15 percent higher aggregate violent crime rates ten years after adoption...the average RTC state would need to roughly double its prison population to offset the increase in violent crime caused by RTC adoption.”⁴ I would assume you have no desire to create more prison space.

While I’m concerned with the complete bill, I would like to specifically talk about the provision that would eliminate the requirement for concealed carry permit holders to notify law enforcement officers if they have a firearm in their possession if stopped by law enforcement. Two years ago I completed our local Citizens Police Academy, a 10-week program that exposed me and others from the community to all aspects of police work including a firearm simulator and traffic stops among many others. While we did have a few laughs with the officers as we all practiced a traffic stop, more seriously, we also better understood

³ “PERMITLESS CARRY: Concealed Carry in Public with No Permit and No Training,” EverytownResearch.org, February 7, 2019, <https://everytownresearch.org/permitless-carry/>.

⁴ John J. Donohue, Abhay Aneja, and Kyle D. Weber, “RIGHT-TO-CARRY LAWS AND VIOLENT CRIME: A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT USING PANEL DATA AND A STATE-LEVEL SYNTHETIC CONTROL ANALYSIS” (National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2017), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23510.pdf>.

the danger officers face while making these stops. Removing the concealed carry notification requirement makes these stops even more dangerous for officers. Law enforcement organizations have opposed this type of legislation in the past. I'll remind you of what Muskingum County Sheriff Matthew Lutz testified to a House committee previously in regard to a similar bill in 2020: "Some of these changes may appear to be small and minute and not of any consequence to some people. To officers, regulating that people have a duty to report is very important. This helps separate law-abiding citizens from the criminals that we arrest." I hope you will consider these concerns of law enforcement officers as well as concerned citizens of Ohio like me. Rather than making me and others feel more safe, this legislation actually has the opposite effect and makes me and others feel less safe knowing the potential increase in concealed weapons being carried by individuals who have possibly no training with a firearm.

Lastly, this legislation allows someone whose concealed carry permit from another state has expired, been suspended or revoked, to carry a concealed weapon. The current process would prevent these people from gaining a permit for concealed carry.

I once read an article in my local newspaper about the introduction of HB 51 from the previous General Assembly session requiring center line rumble strips on two-lane

highways in Ohio. The sponsor of the bill, Representative Ginter, cited as part of his rationale various statistics indicating how these improvements could reduce crashes and deaths.⁵ I would hope you would strongly take into consideration the statistics I and others have presented showing an increase in aggravated assaults committed with firearms after concealed carry permits and training were dropped in other states. In addition, please keep in mind an overwhelming percentage of Americans (80%) including Republicans (65%) believe permits, including training, are necessary. I ask that you not support SB 215.

Thank you for your time and I'm glad to try and answer any questions you may have for me.

⁵ Ben Deeter, "Bill Would Require Centerline Rumble Strips on Many Ohio Highways," The Columbus Dispatch, accessed June 17, 2019, <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20190610/bill-would-require-centerline-rumble-strips-on-many-ohio-highways>.