

Testimony on Senate Bill 215
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Submitted by:
Michele Mueller

Re: Opposition to SB 215

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Michele Mueller, and I am a resident of Harrison, Ohio. I am a volunteer and activist fighting for gun safety measures, and I came into this work right after the Sandy Hook mass shooting, as a grandmother extremely concerned about the safety of not just my grandchildren, but all children, and the safety of our communities. It was a pivotal moment, as I listened to my 8-year-old granddaughter ask us if her school was next, asking if that a war in the Sandy Hook school, as she feared going back to the classroom. What keeps me fighting every single day, is the everyday loss of life that kills at least 100 people a day, and the constant barrage of dangerous gun bills introduced in Ohio over the past 9 years....weakening strong safety requirements, bill after bill...gun bills that do nothing to help save lives in Ohio, but rather take Ohio in the wrong direction, year after year.

I am opposed to SB 215, would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. This bill is clearly a safety issue and will not keep our families safer. Instead, it will gut the existing conceal carry law for handguns, by eliminating the required permits and safety training, and allow people with dangerous histories to carry hidden loaded guns in public, without a single hour of training. The majority of Ohioans overwhelmingly support our current law that includes permits with safety training. Our lawmakers should ensure these core public safety standards for all Ohio communities. Some states, like Alaska and Arizona, which have passed permitless carry, have seen a substantial increase in firearm violence.

I am always at a complete loss when gun bills like SB 215, which take away safety standards, especially during a year with Ohio's gun violence reaching its highest numbers. And yet, our lawmakers continually introduce dangerous bills that would not only weaken Ohio's existing gun laws and endanger our citizens. This bill ignores the will of people that support gun safety bills like background checks, which were introduced in the past with bipartisan support, but never advanced for a vote. Two years ago, post Dayton mass shooting, we screamed at our leaders to "do something," do something to prevent gun violence! We did not hear one single voice scream "weaken our gun laws!" We are still waiting for our leaders to "do something." It is time to bridge the gap of the will of the people to you, our lawmakers, and pass legislation that will decrease gun violence, which will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people with dangerous histories, and out of the hands of untrained individuals. SB 215 will walk us

backwards, by allowing people to carry hidden loaded guns in public without a permit and safety training.

We all want to create a safer world where we do not have to fear that an unqualified and untrained person who has access to guns and could use the law as an excuse to do harm. I respectfully urge this Committee to vote NO on SB 215 as a grandmother, a gun violence prevention volunteer, and a citizen of Ohio. I hope I can count on you to do that.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.

Michele Mueller