

**Opposition Testimony to SB215
Veterans and Public Safety Committee
Mimi Karon**

December 14, 2021

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and Committee: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition of Senate Bill 215. My name is Mimi Karon. I am a very concerned citizen and Clevelander of 43 years. I am a mother of two children, a college student and a young working adult. Thankfully, neither of them live in Ohio and probably never will. Loose gun laws, and a statehouse that has chosen to focus on passing extreme laws that do not reflect their values, nor the values of most Ohioans have made this a very easy decision for them and their peers and I support their choice.

Ohio has the 20th highest rate of gun homicides and gun assaults in the U.S. Guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens, an average of 132 children and teens die by guns every year and 59% of those are homicides. 1,529 Ohioans die annually and an additional 3,552 are wounded. (Everytown, January 2021). With such statistics, I cannot imagine a mother would want her adult children settling in this state.

And today, we discuss a bill that will loosen another very worthy gun policy, our concealed carry permit system. The office of the Attorney General reported in 2019 that sheriffs issued 132,385 concealed carry permits. Of these, 77,959 were renewals and 54,426 were new. Approximately 1,000 were suspended and the same were revoked. The applications denied in 2019 represented the third highest in our permit program's history. SB215 will support these 1,000 people denied and many others who have never applied because they know they would never be granted a permit. Or didn't want to take the time to obtain a Concealed Carry permit and it's training requirement. These are the people you are choosing to protect over my own children and others, including responsible gun owners. People who failed a background check or will not participate in eight hours of training. Along with people who never even applied for a ccw because they knew passage was not an option. These are not the people who deserve your protection by removing the permit system. Children, responsible gun owners and citizens who make a choice in public to keep away from people supporting their right to open carry are the ones you should work to protect. We have rights as well.

SB 215 is going to make the job of our law enforcement more dangerous, more challenging and potentially more deadly. Buckeye State Sheriff's Association, Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police are just three of the very many law enforcement organizations that have made it a priority to let their opposition to Permitless Carry clear. They deserve your unwavering support.

Please reject SB215. Ohioans are exhausted from dealing with gun violence and I ask you to please focus on legislation that is going to “do something” to diminish this increasing problem. Widening the net to allow certain people to carry a concealed weapon who currently cannot is not about protecting the second amendment, which is not guaranteed in the US or the Ohio constitutions. It is about accommodating the extreme gun lobby, a small but very noisy and intimidating group in our state that does not care about the lives of our children or preserving the law of the land. Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony today.