

Ohio Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee  
Opposition Testimony on SB 215  
Submitted by: Shela Blanchard  
December 14, 2021

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Thomas: Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Shela Blanchard and I am writing as a concerned citizen in opposition to SB215. This legislation would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership. Widening the net of who can carry concealed weapons, when gun violence is increasing in our state, is not a way to diminish gun violence and keep our communities safe.

Concealed carry requires a background check and training because it has the potential to be far more dangerous to the public. Concealed carry is given specific licensure in order to maintain a level of safety - in who can own a gun and how they are permitted to carry it. Both the Ohio Constitution and the United States Constitution do not guarantee this right. Gun rights activists manipulate the second amendment and lawmakers to further their "guns everywhere" agenda at the expense of the lives of Ohioans.

SB215 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and sneak up on others. Handguns require more skill to use properly than a car and are at least as lethal. According to The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (June 3, 2020), there were 38,680 fatalities from car crashes. Roughly 35,000 people are killed by guns every year. Yet prior to obtaining a driver's license, Ohio law includes classroom time, on the road practice with an instructor, 50 hours of on the road experience with a licensed citizen as well as a written test and driving exam, over a minimum of six months time. I've not heard of any legislation changing the requirement of obtaining a driver's license to zero hours and no exams. And that's for the sake of safety on the road. Legislation regarding concealed carry and who may obtain a license should be about safety. Not about rushing to put guns in the hands of more citizens and criminals.

I ask you to consider the number of homicides, suicides and un-intentional shootings throughout our state. How will this bill lower those numbers? How, please explain to all the citizens of Ohio the data and research you have to prove this bill will decrease those numbers.

Ohioans deserve safety and allowing anyone including myself to purchase a firearm and carry with no training is not in the best interest of Ohioans. I personally would find myself in a very unpredictable situation. I would be at danger of injuring or killing myself, and putting the public safety of those around me in harm's way. By voting in favor of this dangerous bill, you are putting the public safety of every Ohioan at a higher risk of being killed by someone who is carrying concealed without any training of how to operate, clean and store safely a firearm.

I pray the legislators oppose this bill. In Ohio, we need laws that will keep people safe. Changing the restrictions on who can obtain a CCW and then allowing anyone to carry is not the way. I ask you to please oppose SB215. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.