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OPPOSITION TESTIMONY

on
H. B. No. 201
by
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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police is opposed to H. B. No. 201 because it further loosens the CCW law regulations.

Proponent contend that licensees are the “cream of the crop.” The Association contends that CCW licensees represent a cross-section of Ohio’s population. Every time gun laws are loosened to benefit the so-called “cream of the crop,” the law requirements are loosened for those with anger issues, (9% of the population—Columbus Dispatch, 4/12/17) and those with non-adjudicated psychological, emotional, and mental health issues—all of whom can obtain a CCW license and have access to guns. Before further loosening the CCW requirements, the Association believes we should get a handle on how much gun violence is being committed by licensees. For example, did the shooter in the Columbus Public Library two weeks ago hold a CCW license? Proponents contend that with more guns and looser regulations, there has been less gun violence and gun related crime. One would think that if proponents truly believe this, they would support research that confirms their assertions. If indeed there is less violence with more guns and looser regulations, there would be fewer individuals opposing the various gun bills. To this end, the Association recommends the following two approaches:

1) Make the CCW licensee records available to a select group of university researchers or journalists. Under current law, these are not public records and anyone with access to them commits a fifth degree felony if they release or otherwise disseminate these records without a court order. The records to be made available to the researchers would include the name, county of residence, and date of birth of each person to whom the sheriff has issued a license, temporary license, or those whose license has been revoked or suspended. The researchers could then analyze police crime reports, or even newspaper accounts of shootings, and compare them against the licensee records to see if licensees are committing gun violence. The researchers would be prohibited from revealing any personal information about licensees and could only provide statistical information as to how many licensees commit gun offenses. If the NRA and others truly believe that licensees do not commit gun violence, you would think they would support this type of research instead of fighting it.

2) Enroll CCW applicants in the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database—otherwise known

as the Rapback Program: This provision would require the sheriff who processes an application for a CCW license to enroll the applicant in the Rapback Program (Section 109.5721) when the sheriff requests the background check for licensure. The background check tells the sheriff if the applicant has committed a disqualifying offense in the past. The Rapback Program will inform the sheriff if the applicant commits an offense sometime in the future. Under the Rapback Program, the person's prints are maintained at BCI upon submission. Those prints are run against all subsequent arrests and conviction records received at BCI. If the person is arrested after the initial background check, the sheriff would be notified. It should be stressed that the information in the database is confidential and not a public record. Teachers, security guards, and others are currently enrolled in this program.

In addition, the information would be useful to the sheriff because he would be informed of licensees who commit disqualifying offenses that should result in the suspension or revocation of a license.

In closing, before the General Assembly makes any more changes loosening the CCW law, Ohio needs to get a handle on whether licensees are committing gun violence.