

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: May 15, 2018

Name: Doug White

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

Position/Title: FORMER SENATE PRESIDENT

Address: 3830 OLD DUTCH ROAD

City: MANCHESTER State: OH Zip: 45144

Best Contact Telephone: 937-549-2382 Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 585

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? NONE - WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROPOSALS
DEVELOPED AND PROPOSED THIS WINTER.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Ohio House State & Local Government Committee
Doug White, Gun Violence Task Force member
May 16, 2018

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of H.B. 585. Additionally, I would like to thank Representative Henne for taking the lead and introducing this important and much-needed piece of legislation here in the Ohio House.

My name is Doug White, and as a member of the group that helped craft this legislation, I felt it was important to give some insight not only on the proposed legislation, but also on the process that took place to package these ideas into one bill. As a former member of the legislature myself, I too have grappled with these difficult issues during my time in office. Therefore, I write this testimony with both perspectives in mind.

Recently, it seems as if we are seeing more high-profile shootings in the news. Like clockwork after these events, each side retreats to their talking points, hiding behind political rhetoric such as "we don't need new laws restricting the Second Amendment," or "we have to ban this or that." The problem when we do this is that we hear a lot of noise, but we never even start the conversation.

We must do better.

Last year Governor Kasich decided that we must break through the routine argument that happens after every shooting, so he invited a group of us to sit down and start the conversation. In the room was a group that you don't see very often: Individuals from each side, representing different life perspectives. We all came at this from different personal and professional backgrounds, but we all had one common goal: To just have a real conversation. From the beginning, there was not one particular policy objective. The Governor saw the need for catalyzing a meaningful conversation. He wanted the group to have an open and honest dialogue, free from judgment. To make this happen, the Governor did something that many leaders would not do; He called us together and left us to talk and report back.

The rules were simple: Nothing was off the table, and for any recommendations to move forward there had to be consensus from the group. The group didn't always agree, and sometimes it disagreed strongly; but the conversation always remained respectful, and this was key to being able to come up with these essential recommendations. Very early on into our meetings, the group noticed that before we can move forward, we need to know how we got here. We asked ourselves how Ohio could be a leading example if we are not even doing what we are already authorized to do, which is enforcing the laws already on the books. In going through this initial exercise, we understood that the starting point for our conversation was to identify the foundation, meaning our current state and federal laws. From there, we were able to build on this foundation as we came to understand more fully each other's viewpoints and the gaps in current law that so badly need filled.

The premise of House Bill 585 is simple. There is a great need for us to enforce the laws currently on the books that are aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and dangerous individuals. This legislation would give local prosecutors the authority to prosecute the same gun crimes that are already illegal under federal law. By ensuring consistency between state and federal law, we can make it more likely that people who illegally possess firearms are held accountable.