

Testimony on House Bill 178

House Federalism Committee

Representative John Becker, Chair

Representative Reggie Stoltzfus, Vice Chair

Representative Adam C. Miller, Ranking Member

Submitted by

Laura Robertson-Boyd

Chairman Becker and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 178. My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I live in Bexley, Ohio and am a volunteer with the Ohio Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

We are a grassroots movement of Americans advocating for common sense gun safety measures that protect our families and communities from gun violence while respecting the Second Amendment. Moms Demand Action is part of Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country with more than 5 million supporters.

We are here today to oppose HB178. This dangerous permitless carry bill would jeopardize public safety in Ohio. We support the rights of law-abiding citizens to carry concealed handguns in public places, but we also believe it is common sense to ensure everyone undergo a background check, obtain a permit, and receive safety training before they carry a concealed handgun in public so that public safety as a whole can be protected.

So too, the majority of Ohioans support Ohio's current permit system and overwhelmingly oppose making it legal to carry a hidden, loaded gun in public without a permit or safety training.

Under this bill, a person could buy a gun - which in Ohio does not require a criminal background check - and then, without any further vetting or safety training, immediately carry that loaded gun down the street, into daycares, into schools, onto college campuses, into our places of worship, into our workplaces—pretty much every place except here at the Statehouse. Given the excessive number of mass shootings in America in these types of places we all frequent every day, we find this permitless carry proposal dangerous and irresponsible – taking our public safety in the exact opposite direction we need to go in order to keep our communities safe.

Furthermore, Ohio law enforcement would lose a critical tool for preventing people with dangerous histories from carrying concealed guns in public. This bill would interfere with their ability to enforce the law and keep our communities safe from gun violence. That is why we in Moms Demand Action stand with law enforcement officers who have repeatedly opposed attempts to pass permitless carry legislation.

There is no legitimate public safety reason for dismantling our current permit system. Supporters of this legislation falsely claim that it will reduce crime and that in the few states that have moved to a permitless carry system, it hasn't become the "wild west."

But, facts matter, and we know that states that have enacted permitless carry laws have seen substantial increases in firearm-related crimes. For example, since 2003, when Alaska became the first state to enact permitless carry legislation, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state increased by 82% by 2017.^{1,2} Since Arizona enacted permitless carry legislation in 2010, the rate of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm in that state increased by 39% by 2017.^{3,4} That increase represents 1,797 more gun-related aggravated assaults committed in 2017 than in 2010. Thus, we know that HB178 would increase, rather than decrease, the number of firearms-related crimes in Ohio, making Ohioans less safe.

Moms Demand Action supports Ohio's current concealed carry law: the ability to carry a concealed handgun in public after obtaining a proper permit and undergoing safety training. It's a simple and effective system designed to keep Ohioans safe. This bill is dangerous for Ohio. We stand with law enforcement officials who protect public safety and urge you to vote no on HB178.

Thank you.

Laura Robertson-Boyd
Columbus Membership Lead
Ohio Chapter
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

1. Crime Reported in Alaska 2003. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Statewide Services. <https://bit.ly/2Hy475w>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
2. Crime in Alaska 2017. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Statewide Services. <https://bit.ly/2G0ng4R>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
3. Crime in Arizona, 2010. Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Department of Public Safety. <https://bit.ly/2Uffq3Q>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.
4. Crime in Arizona, 2017. Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Department of Public Safety. <https://bit.ly/2Rds4hV>. Rates were calculated using population data from the United States Census Bureau.