

Chairman Becker, Vice Chairman Stoltzfus, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Federalism Committee:

Thank you for reading my testimony. I have lived in Mason, Ohio for 17 years. I am writing to state my strong objections to the proposed state bill (HB178) which would allow concealed weapon carrying privileges in Ohio without requirements for training, registration or permit.

I respect that the Second Amendment allows that people can have guns. But like any right, it comes with responsibility. Gun ownership should not be exempted from requirements and regulations, especially when those regulations could make us safer as a society. I compare the right to own and operate a gun to the right to own and operate a motor vehicle. Although cars, like guns, can be misused as deadly weapons, no one is advocating that we rid our society of cars. However, before someone may legally operate a car, that operator must be trained, licensed, insured and registered. And everyone will agree that spending time at a Bureau of Motor Vehicles is not fun. But do we want to share the road with uninsured, untrained drivers? No, that would be hazardous and lives would most certainly be lost. The benefits of those requirements far outweigh the dangers of NOT having those requirements. It is the same with guns. To allow concealed carry of guns by individuals without requiring them to be trained or licensed is hazardous. I would be an abuse of the Second Amendment.

We have to find a way to respect law abiding gun owners' rights while also taking steps to protect society and reduce incidents of gun violence. The statistics regarding gun deaths and injuries in this country are staggering and heartbreaking --- other countries do not come close to the losses we suffer every day from guns. From the website of Everytown For Gun Safety:

- * Nearly two-thirds of gun deaths are suicides. The U.S. gun suicide rate is 10 times that of other high-income countries. Access to a gun increases the risk of death by suicide by three times.
- * In an average month, 52 American women are shot to death by an intimate partner, and many more are injured. Access to a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed.
- * Approximately three million American children witness gun violence every year.
- * EVERY DAY 100 AMERICANS ARE KILLED WITH GUNS.

Gun violence touches everyone: My former boss and good friend lost her six year old niece to the massacre in Sandy Hook. My daughter is a student at Virginia Tech, a campus she loves dearly, but a campus that is haunted by the deaths of 33 members of their community in 2007. As Americans we have all wept over countless shootings at schools, churches, concerts, offices, homes ---- no place is immune to gun violence. An argument can be made that "good guys with guns" may have minimized these losses. But an argument to give a gun to an "unlicensed, untrained, unpermitted loose cannon guy" is just dangerous, foolhardy pandering to a special interest lobby and manufacturing group.

Thank you for reading and considering my statement. Please vote NO on HB 178.

Cathleen Elliott

Mason, Ohio