



Beth Liston MD PhD
State Representative

Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 315. This bill allows gun shops to take an active role in addressing the alarming suicide rate we are experiencing in our state and our country – in 2018 suicide was the 10th leading cause of death. As you heard in Representative Russo’s testimony last month, any suicide attempt is much more likely to result in death if a gun is used (85% suicide completion rate versus 5% for other methods). More than half of all suicides occur using a gun, and two-thirds of all gun deaths are suicides. Men, youth, and veterans are particularly at risk.

Across the country gun retailers have realized they could have an impact and save lives by providing suicide prevention information in their stores at the time of firearm purchase. This was started by the New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition after a gun store owner realized that in the course of one week, three people with no connections to each other bought firearms from the same store and took their lives within hours of the purchase. The store owner began meeting with other firearm retailers and mental health professionals to explore the role of gun stores in preventing suicide. Their efforts have resulted in a strong impact on the distribution of suicide prevention information within New Hampshire and other states have started to follow suit.

This legislation is an effort to build on this work in the state of Ohio, empowering gun retailers to be a part of the solution in our rising suicide rates. It quite simply asks guns stores to provide a brochure with



suicide prevention information to individuals who come to purchase a gun. Should this bill move forward, or gain support I would be happy to work with stake holders to best identify the type of information provided. With this simple measure we have the opportunity to engage responsible gun retailers in a way that can help save the life of someone in crisis.

Thank you for your time, I welcome your questions.