Good afternoon and **thank you** to Chairman Coley for the opportunity to testify today.

For those of you unfamiliar with my story, I am **gun violence** survivor. On September 6th, 2018, I walked into a **mass shooting** at my place of employment in Cincinnati. Instead of walking into the office to solve the latest problem with my product, I was forced to solve the most difficult problem I’ve ever encountered – surviving a man with a gun, determined to kill me.

It is difficult to go back to that exact moment *(pause)* … the moment I recognized my circumstances, my limited options for survival, and the impossible reality that I might never see my husband and two small children again.

Before September 6th last year, I, like you, could not begin to imagine this as your reality. I get it. I really do. Before September 6th, 2018, I also believed I was immune. But it can happen to you. I am living testimony of that. Mass shootings have become the great equalizer of gun violence in our country – and no one is immune. Your zip code, your race, your ethnicity, your religion, your age; none of it can save you. Please heed my warning and consider my testimony.

It takes my breath away nearly every time I say this out loud – I was **shot twelve times** and not once did a bullet hit a major organ or artery. It is inconceivable. Yet, here I sit, physically and mentally strong enough to **be here**, to talk to you.

What do you do when you cannotmake sense of the gift you’ve been given? For me, there has always been only one answer: **fight** to ensure that I save as many others from **senseless gun violence** as possible. And that means you too.

I will never forget the first weekend in August of this year, nearly a year after the shooting that changed my life forever. I was on vacation with my family in Florida and the text messages came flooding in regarding the El Paso mass shooting. I **ignored** them – it’s one of my many coping mechanisms to stay mentally strong. But the next morning I could **no longer** ignore the many new text messages as this time … it was **Dayton**. It was too close to **home**. *(pause)* I **lost** it. I was overcome with **fear** … and overcome with **hopelessness** because of inaction.

But it didn’t take long for my resolve and strength to return. One particularly inspiring moment – seeing and hearing the citizens of Dayton chanting, “Do something, do something *(pause)* **do something**” from the very location of the horrific shooting just the day before.

You see, it takes **many** courageous voices to “do something” … and that is why we **all** are here today to testify.

Through the non-profit I founded with my husband, Whitney/Strong, we believe that lives can be saved

from gun violence by advocating and executing responsible gun ownership. We also believe we have a responsibility as gun owners to speak out in favor of **reasonable solutions** that seek to **balance** public safety with **our right** to bear arms.

We are not the only courageous voices. Unable to attend today is Brian Sarver, fellow gun owner and wounded survivor from September 6th. Also, Larry Newcomer, fellow gun owner and brother of Richard Newcomer, one of the three who lost his life on September 6th.

Brian, Larry, and I stand in solidarity with so many other responsible gun owners across our state that are determined to help solve this problem. We represent their voices and are proud to support this bill.

This Strong Ohio bill proposes much-needed reasonable changes that will help curb Ohio’s gun violence epidemic. Each point has been carefully crafted to balance multiple rights: our right to bear arms and our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. As a life-long problem solver, I am proud to be on this side today. We’ve found a solution and we need your help to execute.

Ohioians have asked you to “do something”. What has been put in front of you is not just some thing; it is the right thing for this state. You have a chance to make Ohio safer – for you, your family, your constituents. Please take this unique opportunity to pass reasonable legislation that balances the rights of all and makes each of us safer.

Thank you.