

Testimony on SB215
Government Oversight Committee
Date: February 16, 2022

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking member Brown, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present my testimony in opposition to SB215.

My name is Michelle Heym. I am the volunteer Legislative Co-Lead with the Columbus group of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a grassroots movement of Americans of all backgrounds fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment while protecting us from gun violence. Moms Demand Action, together with Everytown for Gun Safety and Mayors Against Illegal Guns, is the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country with more than 6 million supporters.

I am speaking to you today as this issue personally hits home. I was a young mother living in Connecticut in December, 2012 when a gunman killed 26 children and teachers, and then himself at the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. I know what it's like to be terrified as my own children's school was on lockdown that day. It was that horrific event that inspired the founding of Moms Demand Action, and it is why I am here today.

This week was the four year anniversary of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting in Parkland, FL where 18 children were killed. In addition, there was a mass shooting in Illinois this month in 2008, where a gunman killed 5 students, injured 17, before killing himself. This week I spoke before Columbus City Council in support of them opposing two dangerous bills at the Ohio Statehouse: SB215, Permitless Carry, and HB99, arming teachers in schools. Yesterday, Mayor Ginther declared gun violence a public emergency in our city, to join many other majors in our state.

What are we doing?

We were all here for the passing of HB227. So we know where everyone stands. SB215 is anti-public safety allowing adults over 25, to carry a concealed weapon, without any background check, no training, and no permit. We know that guns can be purchased at gun shows, online and at illegal gun dealers across the country without a background check. Maybe you don't realize, that there is the illegal trafficking of guns in our country, where people can bypass a thorough background check. Attorney General Yost praised our current concealed handgun law by saying

"By any measure, Ohio's concealed carry licensing system has succeeded in combining safeguards that protect the public and provisions that uphold Americans right to bear arms. Safeguards would not be eliminating this system of public safety. Respectfully, it would be supplementing the permit system by thinking about mandatory background checks, extreme risk protection orders or red flag laws, safe storage laws, anything but permitless carry laws like SB215. We are relying on you, our lawmakers, to design policy that will keep Ohioans safe. Not allow Ohio to look like the Wild Wild West, with vigilantes running through the streets, or worse, concealing a deadly weapon.

SB215, Permitless Carry, revokes Ohio's current concealed carry licensing law and is strongly opposed by law enforcement, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Ohio Mayor's Alliance, and a broad coalition of faith leaders, medical professionals, students, teachers, and more. States that have passed Permitless Carry have seen an increase in violence assaults and homicides with guns. SB215 would only exacerbate this problem, making our communities more susceptible to gun violence. Just in Columbus, the homicide rate has reached record levels the past 2 years with 90% of all homicides committed by gun (3). We cannot allow the Legislature to put our communities at even greater risk by passing this dangerous Permitless Carry bill.

Please oppose SB215, as it is anti-public safety, anti police, anti-victim and unconstitutional. Neither the US Constitution, nor the Ohio Constitution protect conceal carry. The Ohio Supreme Court upheld a state forbidding the carrying of concealed weapons and ruled, "there is no constitutional right to bear concealed weapons, in 2003, in the case Klein vs. Leis.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Sources:

1. Everytown Research & Policy. (2022). *Gunfire on school grounds in the United States*. <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>
2. Moberger, A. (2022, February 9). Crisis in the classroom: teacher's union and CCS staff worry about recent school violence. <https://myfox28columbus.com/news/local/crisis-in-the-classroom-teachers-union-and-ccs-staff-worry-about-recent-school-violence>
3. Orner, B. (2022, February 10). Interactive map: Columbus homicides in 2021, city's deadliest year. <https://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/interactive-map-explore-columbus-homicides-in-2021-citys-deadliest-year/>