

Opposition Testimony SB215

February 17, 2022

From Jennifer Weinbrecht

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, and Ranking Member Brown: Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Jennifer Weinbrecht. I live in Geauga County. I am writing as a concerned citizen in opposition to SB215.

This legislation would expand the ability to carry concealed handguns to certain criminals and people charged with crimes who cannot currently obtain such a license. There is no reason to change who may obtain a CCW license. We need laws that will encourage responsible gun ownership. Widening the net of who can carry concealed weapons, when gun violence is increasing in our state, is not a way to diminish gun violence and keep our communities safe.

We've had friends who were murdered by a guy with a gun. Also, kids who attended the school my grandkids attend were murdered by a guy with a gun. A guy with a gun hung around outside my workplace years ago looking for his supervisor, who fortunately didn't go out to his car when expected. Someone realized what was going on and luckily, the guy with the gun was apprehended before he could shoot his supervisor. I didn't grow up expecting to hear guns being shot day and night in my "quiet rural neighborhood." I didn't grow up expecting to know lots of people who have died by gun.

When people want to kill someone, they have an easy time finding guns in our environment where there are more guns than people, and a guy with a gun can do a lot of damage very quickly --- with his gun.

Concealed carry requires a background check and training because concealed carry has the potential to be far more dangerous to the public. Concealed carry is given specific licensure in order to maintain a level of safety - in who can own a gun and how they are permitted to carry it. Both the Ohio Constitution and the United States Constitution do not guarantee this right. Gun rights activists need to stop manipulating the second amendment to further their "guns everywhere" agenda. But, more importantly, lawmakers need to stop caving to them at the expense of the lives of Ohioans.

SB215 would permit Ohioans without any training in the use of guns to carry a concealed handgun and sneak up on others. Handguns require more skill to use properly than a car and are at least as lethal. According to The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (June 3, 2020), there were 38,680 fatalities from car crashes. Roughly 35,000 people are killed by guns every year. Yet prior to obtaining a driver's license, Ohio law includes classroom time, on the road practice with an instructor, 50 hours of on the road experience with a licensed citizen as well as a written test and driving exam, over a minimum of six months time. I've not heard of any legislation changing the requirement of obtaining a driver's license to zero hours and no exams. And that's for the sake of safety on the

road. Legislation regarding concealed carry and who may obtain a license should be about safety. Not about rushing to put guns in the hands of more citizens and criminals.

The only ones who benefit from this bill is the gun lobby who will make money from the increased sales of guns once the permitting system is removed. This reminds us of the tobacco companies who financially profited off of the public health threat to Americans posed by tobacco use. Gun manufacturers lobby for these laws because they profit from them. If in fact guns truly did save lives, America would be the safest country in the world due to all the guns we have in circulation, and yet we are not.

We endure so many news stories about shootings in our country that we become insensitive to them. In other countries, gun deaths that happen here in one week would happen in a year. Here are just a few recent examples:

- In Minnesota on Feb 1st, one student was killed and one was critically wounded in a shooting outside the South Education Center in Richfield, MN.
- In Virginia on Feb 1st, two campus police officers were shot and killed at Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, VA on Tuesday. At the time of the shooting, students at the college were ordered to shelter in place. Later that afternoon, a suspect was taken into custody by law enforcement.
- In Minnesota on Feb 2nd, Minneapolis police shot and killed Amir Locke, a 22 year old Black man, during a police raid Wednesday morning in an apartment building in Minneapolis. Locke was not named in the search warrant and was not a target of the investigation that led to the raid. Recently released body camera footage does not show police announcing themselves before entering the apartment.

We don't have to keep living like this. My friends who live in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the UK, Germany, Japan, and other countries DO NOT LIVE LIKE THIS.

Monday February 7th was the last day of National Gun Violence Survivor's Week, where America surpassed the number of gun deaths experienced by our peer countries in an entire calendar year. Tragically, our gun death rate is 11 times greater than that of other high income countries. Gun violence in America is a public health crisis and we need our elected state officials to address it like our local Mayors are doing in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Elyria, Dayton and Columbus.

In Ohio, we need laws that will keep people safe. Changing the restrictions on who can obtain a CCW and then allowing anyone to carry is not the way. I ask you to please oppose SB215.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.