

Government Oversight Committee
Opposition Testimony: HB 51
Submitted by Monica Harmon

To the Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to House Bill 51.

My name is Monica Harmon. I am an Ohio homeowner, mother of two young children and a pediatric Speech Language Pathologist, employed by Akron Children's Hospital. I live in Jackson Township, a conservative suburban neighborhood. I strongly oppose HB 51.

This bill is dangerous to Ohio families. It will nullify existing and future federal gun safety laws, like background checks, age limits for owning AR-15s and Red Flag laws. It will allow more people who should not have guns to carry them. Research by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health clearly shows that states that have looser gun laws have higher rates of gun violence. Gun violence is the leading cause of death of children in our state.(1) We already lose an average of 1,702 people from gun deaths in Ohio each year. Gun violence is the leading cause of death of children in our state.(2)

I believe this bill is especially dangerous to women and children. Under current federal law, people convicted of abuse cannot concealed carry. If this bill passes, Ohio's legislature can nullify the Federal law and only State law will apply. Under Ohio State law, as long as the abuse does not rise to the level of a **Felony** charge, the abuser can still concealed carry a gun. To be a **Felony** charge they must have caused "*serious physical harm-like incapacity, disfigurement or injury causing prolonged intractable pain*" [ORC 2901.01(A)(5)]. As long as the victim can recover from their injuries (ex: broken bones, concussion) it's only a **Misdemeanor** and the abuser could still carry a gun. Women are five times more likely to be murdered by an abusive partner when the abuser has access to a gun.(3) One of the most frequent ways children are shot is when they get caught in the middle of a violent domestic dispute.

Please stop this extreme bill.

Thank you,
Monica Harmon

1,2. (CDC Underlying Cause of Death, 2018-2021).

3. Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN et al, Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships... Am J Public Health. 2003 July; 93(7): 1089–1097.