

Opponent Testimony
House Bill 51
Mimi Karon
March 14, 2023

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan and members of the Government Oversight Committee. My name is Mimi Karon and I am a mother of two young adult children who thankfully do not live in Ohio and will not live here until our lawmakers work to make communities safer rather than passing laws that are dangerous, unconstitutional and a waste of taxpayers' financial resources.

It is heartbreaking for me to think of women watching Tuesday's opponent hearing worried about an abusive former/intimate partner or one with a restraining order being able to access a firearm. In Ohio, our lawmakers make it very easy for anyone to legally purchase a gun. Why do they need to break the law? HB51 will continue this trend of making legal gun ownership easy, no matter who you are. If you do not care about women. Perhaps you care about children, as they often end up shot and killed along with an intimate partner.

While you may be of the opinion that domestic abusers do not follow the law, thanks to permissive carry that passed last year, according to Sergeant James Fuqua of the Columbus Division of Police, "We are absolutely concerned that [people who] won't have a license to carry a firearm will absolutely increase the number of guns that people will carry on their person so most certainly the number of guns that will be stolen will most certainly increase." (Channel 10 WBNS, April 19, 2022) "We are absolutely alarmed by the number of guns that are taken from cars that are parked and unoccupied," the Sergeant also said. I'm pretty certain these firearms are traced to crimes rather than found in the woods on hunting excursions.

I really hope our legislature will begin to pass laws that Ohioans have been shown to want, like background checks rather than laws that actually put our law enforcement in harm's way. Increasing domestic violence perpetrators' access to firearms will increase the number of dangerous, potentially lethal calls our law enforcement must answer. I hope that our Republican lawmakers will actually do what they say and back men and women in blue with laws that enhance their safety.

While I'm on the subject of law enforcement, how heinous and vengeful is this bill for penalizing our federal law enforcers wanting to find employment on a local force. Our news sources tell us law enforcement are leaving the field because their work conditions are too dangerous. We need to pass laws that support this profession and encourage those who want to protect our communities to have that ability. Please look out for the interests of Ohioans rather than play politics when their lives of our children are at stake.

The Missouri law, identical to HB51 was just ruled unconstitutional by a Federal Judge last week. How arrogant of the sponsors of the bill to think HB51 will have a different outcome. How insulting for this bill's sponsors to be careless with the hard-earned money of Ohioans that will be used to defend inevitable lawsuits against this bill.

It is offensive and insulting that this bill is continuing along the legislative process in our state. It is the most divisive time most people alive today have ever known. The bill's sponsor choose to exacerbate this issue by threatening one of the very few things all Americans have in common,

the US Constitution. In the proponent hearing last week, I heard more than one disparaging remark against attorneys. I was disgusted. If there were more lawyers in our statehouses, more who understood our Constitution and the meaning behind its clauses and Amendments, the landscape in our country would look very different.

I ask that you please spare women, law enforcement and all Ohioans from the dangers HB51 presents by opposing this bill. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide my testimony