

Government Oversight Committee
Opposition Testimony on HB 272
Submitted by: Pat Krummrich

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 272.

In my career as a Medical Speech Pathologist at Akron Children's Hospital, specializing in Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing, I had to testify at several custody hearings. These were not polite cases to determine which parent will get the child at Easter and Christmas. These were bitter cases where emotions were high. I remember the first time I was summoned to appear in person to testify.

The case involved a 1 year old child I'd been treating for feeding problems. The infant child was born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. This meant the mother took drugs during the pregnancy and the baby had to go through withdrawal at birth. Such children often have developmental delays or longer term disabilities. This baby had difficulty eating by mouth and had to be primarily fed through a G tube into her stomach. The court hearing was to determine whether the biological mother should be allowed to retain custody or whether the child should become a ward of the state to ensure her safe medical care.

I knew that it was likely that the mother would have other family members in court. They were vehemently upset about the child being possibly taken from the mother. My husband and I were nervous about my safety as I parked and entered a multi-purpose Government Services Building, similar to the one described in HB 272. I was instructed BY THE COURT to arrive 2 HOURS BEFORE the hearing was scheduled because court cases vary in length and hearing times can be approximate. Sure enough, in the hallway, I encountered the family, the mother and her attorney. Once in the staging room and courtroom, I felt safer but I was still nervous about the family knowing when I was coming and going from the building. My testimony was the deciding factor in the case and I worried for a long time that the family might track me down.

In other cases, I did not actually testify in court but had to report in person to Child Services about a child's progress. When these interviews occurred, I had to wait in a public waiting room, in a multi purpose building, until my

name was called. It was always in my mind that I, along with the attorneys and caseworkers present, might be at risk. But I generally quieted my fears with the thought that no one was allowed to bring a gun into that building. I did not have to worry about whether or not a hearing was in session at the same time I was in the building. The rule was rightfully consistent: No guns in the building because it contained a courtroom.

HB 272 would remove that safe zone for public servants and citizens when they are doing their jobs or conducting their daily business.

Reuters recently reported that U.S. judges faced over 4,500 threats in 2021 amid rising extremism. (1) HB 272 would remove a layer of protection for local judges as they move about government buildings and their offices when court is not in session.

Yet again, this committee is being asked by the gun lobby to elevate the “Rights” of gun enthusiasts over average Ohioans. Vote No on HB 272.

Respectfully, Pat Krummrich

1. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-judges-faced-over-4500-threats-2021-amid-rising-extremism-official-2022-02-14/>