

Chairman Peterson, and members of the Government Oversight Committee:

My name is Cordelia Van der Veer, and I am a student at The Ohio State University and a member of the National Advisory Board of Students Demand Action for Gun Safety in America. I am a lifelong resident of Ohio and have grown up in the age of gun violence.

I am testifying today because HB 51 is a dangerous gun bill that seeks to prohibit Ohio law enforcement and law enforcement agencies from assisting in enforcing certain federal gun laws.

Throughout my childhood, I witnessed how gun violence impacts communities. From the mass shooting in Dayton, OH to a shooting in my neighborhood in Toledo that left three dead, I could never escape the horrors of gun violence. A few weeks ago, there was an armed robbery right outside my dorm. For college-aged people in America, gun violence is the leading cause of death. Young Ohioans cannot help but wonder if they will be the next victim of a horrible, preventable act of gun violence.

As citizens of Ohio, we all care about keeping “the heart of it all” safe for everyone. However, in an average year, 1,702 Ohioans die by guns. Based on a report from Everytown, gun violence costs Ohio \$22.3 billion each year, of which \$493.7 million is paid by taxpayers.

HB 51, if enacted, would undermine federal firearm laws, and frustrate the efforts of local and state law enforcement who try to assist in bringing criminals to justice. This bill creates an opportunity for firearms to fall into the wrong hands. HB 51 asks us to accept an Ohio where students must live in fear of danger that would otherwise be prevented by federal law. In addition, this law is most likely unconstitutional. When the Missouri state legislature passed a similar law, U.S. District Court Judge Brian Wimes ruled the law unconstitutional and “invalid, null, void, and of no effect.”

I encourage members of the Government Oversight Committee to consider future generations of Ohioans who will live in fear of gun violence and vote NO on HB 51.

Best,

Cordelia Van der Veer
Student at The Ohio State University
National Advisory Board Member of Students Demand Action