



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OHIO**

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Testimony before the
Policy and Legislative Oversight Committee
The Honorable Mike Dovilla, Chair
By Rosie Craig
League of Women Voters of Ohio
November 13, 2013

My name is Rosie Craig from Cleveland, Ohio. I am here as a member of the League of Women Voters of Ohio to speak on their behalf, in opposition to HB 203. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization, opposed to the dangerous proliferation of firearms and supporting measures that prevent violence in our communities. At our State Convention in 2001, the League delegates passed a resolution opposing concealed carry weapon laws (CCW).

We opposed the passage of the original CCW legislation in 2004 and remain opposed to the various laws which further broadened Ohioans right to carry concealed weapons, including the “castle-doctrine” laws passed in 2008, lifting the duty to retreat before engaging in the use of deadly force while in the home or in ones automobile.

HB 203 is the latest proposed liberalization of Ohio’s concealed carry weapons licensing (CCW) law. HB 203 would lift the duty to retreat for CCW permit holders wherever they feel threatened as long as they were legally in that place. That would include a grocery store, a movie theater, a busy sidewalk, almost anywhere. Common sense requires that persons who can safely retreat from a situation in which they may rightly or wrongly feel threatened, should be required to do so. Should the situation warrant it, they can call police officers who are trained to deal with such situations. It is important that our laws encourage people to deescalate potentially violent situations when they can safely do so.

In addition, HB 203 proposes to take Ohio’s inadequate state CCW training requirements of 12 hours and reduce it to a mere four hours. With the other states reciprocity agreements being proposed, the bill would recognize permit holders from states that have no training requirements at all. The bill would lift the 5 year residency requirement, and weaken the criminal criteria for denying a CCW license. This is irresponsible and puts Ohio residents at risk.

In the context of the gun violence that is evident in our country today, Ohio should be passing laws that limit access to guns to those people who can use them responsibly and knowledgeably. Ohio should expand background checks on gun purchases and enact a statewide ban on assault weapons. We should pass HB 31 which would require adults to secure their firearms against unauthorized minors. This is a better and safer direction for legislation concerning guns. HB 203 is a bill that for the most part will expand access to concealed carry

permits and sanction a violent reaction to a situation in which that reaction should better be avoided.

Ohio doesn't need this law. We ask you to oppose HB 203.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.