



**Opponent Testimony on Sub-House Bill 227 –  
*Regards concealed weapons and concealed carry without license*  
House Government Oversight Committee  
By Rosie Craig, Gun Control Specialist - League of Women Voters of Ohio  
October 14, 2021**

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Sub-House Bill 227. My name is Rosie Craig and I am the Gun Control Specialist for the League of Women Voters of Ohio. **I am here today to speak in opposition to Sub-HB 227, *Regards concealed weapons and concealed carry without license*.**

With this bill, Ohio's "Concealed Hand-gun Carry Licensing System," flawed as it is, would be eviscerated. Sub-HB227 would make legal for concealment, those deadly "assault-style" weapons like the AR-15 and other weapons of choice for mass shooters and domestic terrorists. This law would abandon the practice of requiring background checks and minimal firearms training for someone to carry a hidden but deadly "handgun." With no requirement to have a permit, there is no possibility to revoke the privilege of carrying a concealed weapon.

In changing the concealed carry law from "handgun" to "weapon," those with ill intent could carry and hide any long gun, including those designed and built to accommodate large ammunition clips.

We acknowledge and appreciate that Sub-HB227 has restored the requirements that a concealed handgun licensee or qualified military member notify a law enforcement officer when carrying a handgun if/when stopped. However, such requirements have not been restored in the companion bill, SB215. We know from experience that provisions from a companion bill can end up in a final version of the bill, and **request that you ensure said requirement will remain in the final version of any bill passed by this committee and the Legislature.**

The League of Women Voters of the United States in 1994 at its National Convention adopted its National position still in place today, stating the belief that *the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.*

The League of Women Voters of Ohio has opposed legislation to Carry a Concealed Handgun (CCW) since 2001 by a delegate vote at the LWV Ohio state convention. I personally attended proponent and opponent testimony prior to the establishment of the CCW licensing system in 2004, as well as subsequent CCW legislation. From the onset, proponents claimed that the establishment of CCW in Ohio would make Ohioans safer. Indeed, the opposite has been true. Now Ohioans are less safe than ever from gun violence. <sup>(1)</sup>

In 2004, proponents boasted of allowing CCW while having reasonable safeguards for public safety. However, since 2004, Ohio legislation has significantly expanded concealed and open carry gun rights. As of 2019 according to the CDC, the number of deaths per year in Ohio has increased by 70 % since CCW was enacted in 2004. <sup>(2)</sup> Such a toll on human life has continued as this legislature has stripped cities of tools and mechanisms to protect citizens through the preemption of home rule police powers in 2006 and again in 2018. It has allowed guns to be carried in more places with less accountability if someone is hurt or killed errantly (Stand-Your-Ground). Now, this legislative body would have us throw out virtually all restrictive measures to those who wish to carry any weapon, concealed or openly, so long as the “weapon” is not otherwise prohibited by federal law.

Proponents of these laws have been and continue to be absurd in their premise that law-abiding citizens should not be constrained or inconvenienced in their gun practices. Who is to know which of these law-abiding citizens will develop ill intent! Every perpetrator of criminal behavior starts out as “law-abiding,” and many who have committed crimes simply have yet to be caught. The proliferation of unregulated firearms with little accountability for those who own them puts the lives of innocent people at risk.

We have seen in Ohio and in the nation, a rise in the deadliness of mass shootings, both due to the clip size availability and the lethality of the ammunition used. We have seen the rise in the number and deadliness of school shootings. We have seen the rise of domestic terrorism against certain ethnic, religious and racial groups where an AR-15 rifle has been used execution-style against innocent people.

During the early pandemic months of 2020, political pressures meant that Ohio gun stores stayed open as “essential businesses.” This gave rise to the largest sales of guns in Ohio and in the country since the FBI’s background check system for gun purchases (NICS data base) was brought online. Vulnerable communities, mostly poor and of color, have paid the price. As gun sales spiked in Ohio, so did gun deaths in all of Ohio’s major Cities, where murder by firearm increased by 27%. <sup>(3)</sup>

This law can only encourage domestic terrorism by people not yet in trouble with the law, or recruited to violent ideals for some fanatical cause. According to the FBI, hate crimes in 2020 rose to a 12 year high, amid increasing attacks on Black and Asian people. <sup>(4)</sup> Shamefully, HB

227 is legislation that is “custom-made” for a rise in more racially motivated or extremist domestic disturbances.

Over the past 15 years, this legislative body has failed in its duty to protect its citizens because it has been unwilling to enact legislative measures to rein in perpetrators of gun violence *before* they start shooting. We need legislation for background checks on gun purchases, reducing clip size and prohibiting military style features on semi-automatic weapons. We need safe storage legislation requiring adults to keep guns away from minors who should not have them with legal liability consequences if they don't. This body should support the enactment of strong Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws which would allow *through due process*, the temporary removal of guns from the possession of demonstrably dangerous people. States with ERPO laws have seen reductions in completed gun suicides as well. <sup>(5)</sup>

**With these trends and issues in consideration, I urge members of the committee to vote against this bill and to consider instead common-sense gun regulations** which have reduced gun deaths in other states, like Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Hawaii where the gun death rate is one-fourth of what it is in Ohio. <sup>(6)</sup>

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I will be happy to take any questions.

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2021/09/01/503127/concealed-carry-linked-increased-gun-violence-wisconsin/>
2. In Ohio there were 934 gun deaths in 2003 and since CCW in 2004 that number has risen to 1589 for 2019. *Center for Disease Control*
3. <https://dayton247now.com/news/local/ohio-sees-record-increase-in-gun-violence-murder-by-firearms-up-by-27>
4. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/hate-crimes-fbi-2020-asian-black/2021/08/30/28bede00-09a7-11ec-9781-07796ffb56fe\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/hate-crimes-fbi-2020-asian-black/2021/08/30/28bede00-09a7-11ec-9781-07796ffb56fe_story.html)
5. American Psychiatric Association  
[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=2ahUKEwiXtNW-zJ3iAhXSna0KHcs7AJUQFjADegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.psychiatry.org%2FFile%2520Library%2FPsychiatrists%2FDirectories%2FLibrary-and-Archive%2Fresource\\_documents%2F2018-Resource-Documents-on-Risk-Based-Gun-Removal-Laws.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3GnDWb\\_w4e\\_exj5QLh-aP](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=2ahUKEwiXtNW-zJ3iAhXSna0KHcs7AJUQFjADegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.psychiatry.org%2FFile%2520Library%2FPsychiatrists%2FDirectories%2FLibrary-and-Archive%2Fresource_documents%2F2018-Resource-Documents-on-Risk-Based-Gun-Removal-Laws.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3GnDWb_w4e_exj5QLh-aP) (Although their data are relatively limited, the authors conclude that Connecticut's law may prevent one suicide for every 10 to 20 gun removals, primarily by delaying access to firearms during a period of acute crisis.)
6. <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/scorecard/#MA>