



**Dear Honorable Members of the 134<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly:**

On behalf of police chiefs throughout the state, thousands of members of the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and Ohio's largest bipartisan coalition of mayors, we stand together to express our strong opposition to the proposed law changes in Senate Bill 215 and House Bill 227.

We know there is a shared commitment to public safety in Ohio and all her cities, towns, and villages. That commitment was reflected in recent efforts by the Ohio General Assembly to suballocate a significant portion of federal resources to local communities to help with a wide range of law enforcement supports. However, the proposal to repeal Ohio's concealed carry permitting law betrays this shared commitment and threatens the safety of our communities and our law enforcement professionals.

Our organizations oppose these bills for three primary reasons: officer safety, crime prevention, and community violence. We will attempt to concisely summarize these concerns below as more detailed explanations have already been submitted to the House and Senate committees that have been holding hearings on these proposals.

First, these proposed law changes threaten officer safety because of the fundamental changes to the *duty to notify* provisions for those carrying a concealed firearm. Police officers face uncertainty and potentially life-threatening danger every day. The current *duty to promptly notify* for concealed carry license holders is one small step to help reduce that uncertainty and keep police officers safe. It also helps to establish an important distinction between lawful gun owners and those who are illegally concealing a weapon. Switching the burden to police – who already have a list of questions to ask – to inquire if the person is carrying would unnecessarily make the already difficult job of police officers more difficult and potentially lead to dangerous mistakes.

Second, this proposed law change would make it more difficult for police officers to prevent crime and take illegal guns out of the hands of criminals. This is because law enforcement would be prohibited from stopping a suspicious individual with a firearm. It would also prevent officers from temporarily seizing a firearm during an investigative detention, which would senselessly endanger our law enforcement professionals. Furthermore, the proposed law change would require officers to make an unknowable determination if a suspect is "law-abiding" before an investigation even occurs.

Third, communities across the state and country are seeing an increase in gun violence. Illegal guns in the hands of criminals have contributed to a record number of homicides in some communities. We believe that allowing even more individuals to carry concealed weapons with no training or background check, and few ways to address those who may be illegally carrying, will result in more gun violence in our communities.

There is no doubt that Ohio's current concealed carry law has prevented individuals from carrying concealed weapons that shouldn't have them. In 2020, over 2,000 concealed carry licenses were revoked, and 1,777 licenses were denied by sheriffs' offices throughout Ohio. If Ohio's concealed carry licensing laws are repealed, there will be very few safeguards to prevent potentially dangerous individuals, including by those previously convicted of misdemeanor assaults on police officers, from carrying a concealed firearm.

In closing, we know there are areas of common ground when it comes to public safety. We look forward to continuing the difficult work we must do together to keep Ohio and all her communities safe. However, repealing Ohio's concealed carry permitting laws would be a dangerous step in the wrong direction that will make our communities less safe. We sincerely hope these bills do not advance past the committee process, but if they do, we are urging every member of the Ohio General Assembly to stand with our local leaders and law enforcement professionals in opposition to SB 215 and HB 227.

Respectfully submitted,



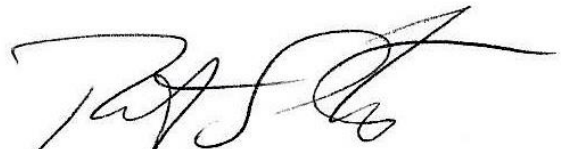
Bruce Pijanowski, Chief of Police, Delaware  
**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police  
Legislative Committee, Chairman**



Gary Wolske, Garfield Heights Police Department  
**President, Ohio Fraternal Order of Police**



Mayor Tito Brown, City of Youngstown  
**Ohio Mayors Alliance Executive Board and the  
Mayors and Police Chiefs Leadership Committee**



Mayor Robert Stone, City of Beavercreek  
**Ohio Mayors Alliance Executive Board and the  
Mayors and Police Chiefs Leadership Committee**