

# Dayton Daily News

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## **Bill would clear way for guns on campus, in day cares**

By Lance Lambert - Staff Writer



Sandy Hook

Individuals with proper permits may soon be allowed to carry firearms on some college campuses and even daycares if a bill that has cleared its first legislative hurdle becomes law.

The Ohio House earlier this week approved a bill that would lift some concealed-carry restrictions, including on colleges, private aircraft and government buildings.

Some universities and child centers have voiced opposition to the bill while proponents say it will eliminate easy targets for shooters intent on killing.

“I can’t imagine that (parents) would be comfortable at all. I know they feel safe with us,” said Mary Burns, president and CEO of Miami Valley Child Development Centers. “It (allowing conceal-carry in child centers) would raise anxiety about their children’s safety. It could affect attendance, and they might say ‘I’m not sending my children here.’ ”

Burns says federal regulations that prevent firearms at Head Start locations would likely supersede a change in state law, but she’s still concerned.

“I can’t see what the benefits would be. I can’t see how this could be positive at all.”

Wright State University officials point to another scenario in which concealed firearms could cause complications: an active shooter situation.

“If a campus police officer arrives on the scene they wouldn’t know who the shooter is,” WSU said in a statement.

The university says it would take more police training to prepare for such a scenario.

State Sen. Joe Uecker, R-Loveland, supports the legislation. He says current laws put targets on daycares and colleges.

“It’s ridiculous for the government to post signs saying ‘no guns allowed’ — they might as well say ‘victims only,’” Uecker said.

Uecker, who previously worked in law enforcement, says the proposed law wouldn’t prevent police from doing their job during an active-shooter scenario on a college campus.

“If two cops are approaching them, they won’t shoot both parties,” he said. “Permit holders need to show some common sense as well. The idea of the permit isn’t to act as policemen, but to defend themselves.”

### **College decision?**

A few local universities say they would be able to get around the new law. That’s because the bill would let colleges and private employers decide if they would allow concealed-carry on their property.

Miami University officials say the decision would be up to their trustees.

The proposed law also would maintain a ban on concealed weapons in government buildings unless an agency decides to allow them.

The bill was revised to remove houses of worship from the list of places where weapons would be allowed.

John McNay, president of the Ohio AAUP — a union representing higher education faculty across the state — says the bill could create unsafe classrooms and workplaces.

“There are a lot of young people, some who have emotional problems, and some of them under a great deal of stress. The idea that some of these people would be armed at the same time seems foolish,” he said.

McNay also doesn’t buy that all individuals with permits will act responsibly.

“There is an assumption that if these people are licensed to carry guns then they will act responsibly and wisely with the weapons. But you know, we license people to drive cars, too, and we see people driving foolishly and carelessly all the time.”

The legislation, House Bill 48, passed 63-25. It was sponsored by Rep. Ron Maag, R-Lebanon.

The bill will move to the Senate for consideration. Uecker says there seems to be some support from his peers in that chamber.

### **Pro and con**

Eight psychologists and doctors at Case Western Reserve University are trying to convince legislators that this bill could increase gun violence.

“The increase of guns being brought to these facilities could result in these people accessing unattended, unsecured guns; thousands of people each year could be harmed materially,” they told a committee hearing. “Allowing concealed guns into school safety zones would compromise safety rather than increase it.”

Sean Maloney of the Buckeye Firearms Association cited recent shootings as evidence that people should have the “right” to protect themselves.

“Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora Movie Theater, Luby’s Cafeteria, San Ysidro, Ft Hood. Unfortunately, we have become all too familiar with these tragedies. Again and again it happens, almost always in a ‘gun free’ zone, more appropriately labeled victim zones,” he said.

“Mass killings are often planned events. The goal is to kill as many people as possible, setting a new ‘high score’ to become famous. They are crimes of violence and control committed by a coward. The criminal looks for a place where he can kill quickly and easily in a limited time. A law that disarms his victims enables such a killer.”

The Associated Press contributed to this report.