

April 7, 2022

RE: SB156, Roegner

Dear Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee:

At the March 10th hearing of SB156 I was asked by members of this committee how many local jurisdictions in Ohio regulate knives with local laws stricter than state statute. I have attached a list that was accurate as of this writing. As you can see from the list many jurisdictions in Ohio regulate the tools that Ohioans carry for work every single day. The idea that a tool (in this case a knife) one may use for work, or sport is legal in one town, yet illegal in another is simply unfair. How is a citizen to know how to comply with the law when moving about the state?

I was also asked to provide data on the disparity of arrests based on the race of the person being arrested. Unfortunately this data is not available for Ohio, however I do have data from New York that is instructive. According to the NYPD and the Legal Aid Society of NY 85% of the people arrested for possession of an “illegal knife” were black or Hispanic. That is why in a **bipartisan** manner, in 2019 the New York State legislature repealed the worst parts of it’s knife statute. The repeal was sponsored by NY Assembly Member Dan Quart (D), and Signed by then Governor Andrew Cuomo (D). It is clear that arrests for simple possession of a pocket knife often end up sending the person arrested into the depths of the criminal justice system. This is simply unjust.

In Baltimore Maryland Freddie Gray was stopped for simple possession of a pocket knife that was LEGAL under state law, but ILLEGAL under a Baltimore ordinance. If not for that local ordinance the interaction between Freddie Gray and the police would never have happened. This is exactly what SB156 seeks to avoid. SB156 is criminal justice reform.

I urge you to vote yes on SB156 and support your constituents right to expect consistency in Ohio law.

Respectfully,



Todd Rathner
Knife Rights
Director of Legislative Affairs

Examples of Local Knife Restrictions in Ohio Stricter Than State Law

Akron, OH 137.28 A. No person shall: 1. Manufacture, possess for sale, sell, or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife, or similar weapon;

137.02 A. Weapons Generally. Except as otherwise permitted by law, no person shall carry on or about his person a ... knife having a blade two and one-half inches in length or longer, ... without proper justification. "Proper justification" includes, but is not limited to, the right of law enforcement officers and other persons specifically authorized by law to be armed within the scope of his or her duties. This section does not apply to a person who is engaged in a lawful business or pursuit justifying possession of such an item and the person did not use or intend to use the item as a weapon. It shall be an affirmative defense to a violation of this section that the defendant was at the time engaged in a lawful business, calling, employment or occupation and the circumstances in which he was placed justified a prudent man in possessing such a weapon for the defense of his person, property or family.

Highland Hts, OH 549.11 No person shall carry on or about his person ... any knife fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade, opening the knife and locking the knife in the open position, commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife, or any knife having a blade two and one-half inches in length or longer, or any straight edge razor.

549.06 (a) No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

Bay Village, OH 549.06 (a) No person shall: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

549.12 (a) No person shall carry a ... bowie knife, dirk, stiletto, dagger or other knife having a blade of two and one-half inches in length or longer, ... or a knife fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade, opening the knife and locking the blade in the open position and commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife, ... on or about his person. (NOTE: affirmative defense MIGHT be provided as a concealed "deadly weapon other than a handgun" in 549.02)

Cleveland, OH 627.11 No person shall knowingly carry, have in his or her possession or ready at hand any ... knife having a blade (2-1/2) inches in length or longer... while at or about a public place.

§ 627.15 (a) No person shall: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or spring-loaded weapon capable of propelling a knife or knifelike projectile, including, but not limited to, a ballistic knife (sometimes referred to commonly as a KGB knife)... This paragraph does not apply to the possession and/or use of advanced martial arts weapons on the premises of a recognized martial arts school or during the time such weapons are being transported directly to or from such premises.

(2) As used in paragraph (a)(1) hereof, the following designated martial arts weapons are defined as follows:

C. "Knife" – a weapon consisting of a single- or double-edged short blade for cutting or throwing and designed, manufactured or marketed as a martial arts weapon.

Dayton, OH Sec. 138.06 (A) No person shall: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ...switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife, or similar weapon;

Grove City, OH 549.11 ...exhibit for sale or carry on or about his person any knife with a blade fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade, opening the knife and locking the knife in the open position, commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife.

903.16 or bring into a park any switchblade, hunting knife, dagger... This prohibition shall not apply to any knife with a blade shorter than three (3) inches in length.

549.06 (a) No person shall (3) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell, or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife, or similar weapon;

Strongville, OH 672.11 or other knife having a blade of two and one-half inches in length or longer,

Cuyahoga Falls, OH 549.10 (a) No person shall carry a ..., bowie knife, dirk, stiletto, dagger or other knife having a blade two and one-half inches in length or longer, ... or a knife fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade opening the knife and locking the blade in the open position and commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife, ... on or about the person without proper justification. "Proper justification" includes, but is not limited to, the right of law enforcement officers and other persons specifically authorized by law to be armed within the scope of his duties. It shall be an affirmative defense to a violation of this section, if it appears that the defendant was at the time engaged in a lawful business, employment or occupation, or that the circumstances in which he was placed justified a prudent man to possess such weapon for the defense of his person, property or family.

549.06 (a) No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

Warrensville Hts. OH 549.06 UNLAWFUL TRANSACTIONS IN WEAPONS. No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon

741...No person shall engage in the business of selling, or shall sell or give away to any person, within the City, any ... bowie knife, dirk or other weapon of similar character, which can be concealed on the person, without securing a permit to do so as hereinafter provided.

741.05 No person shall purchase any... bowie knife, dirk or other weapon of similar character, which can be concealed on the person, without first securing from the Chief of Police a permit to do so

741.07 Whoever gives or sells a pocket knife having a blade of two and one-half inches in length or longer shall, before making such gift or sale, require the purchaser to properly identify himself and require him to register in a book kept for such purposes, giving his name, address and age. The register shall be subject to inspection by any officer of the law upon demand.

Lyndurst, OH 672.13 (a) No person shall have in his or her possession any knife having a blade length of more than two and one-half inches, except for culinary purposes or when the same is a bona fide part of sportsmen's equipment incidental to hunting or fishing.

672.07 (a) No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

672.09 (a) Except as provided in divisions (c) and (d) of this section, no person shall ... make use of any switchblade knife, throwing knife... within the corporate limits of the Municipality.

(c) This section does not extend to cases in which ... switchblade knives, throwing knives ... are used in self-defense, in the discharge of official duty or in justifiable homicide.

(d) This section does not extend to cases in which ... switchblade knives, throwing knives ... are used in the confines of dwellings, provided such use is under adult supervision and is approved by the Chief of Police.

Rocky River OH 549.06 (a) No person shall: (1) Possess or carry on or about his person, manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, ... any knife fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade, opening the knife and locking the knife in the open position, commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife, or any knife having a blade two and one-half (2½) inches in length or longer, or any straight edge razor;

Tallmadge, OH 549.06 (a) No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

549.13 (a) No person shall knowingly carry, transport or have ready at hand in or upon any public place any ... switchblade knife, spring knife, gravity knife, ballistic knife, butterfly knife, or any similar device or instrument manufactured, fashioned, designed or used as a dangerous or deadly weapon, or a knife having a blade over two and one-half inches in length which is designed or specially adopted for use as a weapon or is possessed, carried or used as a weapon.

(d) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under this section of carrying or having control of a dangerous or deadly weapon, that the actor was not otherwise prohibited by law from having the weapon, and that any of the following apply:

(1) The weapon was carried or kept ready at hand by the actor for defensive purposes, while he was engaged in or was going to or from his lawful business or occupation, which business or occupation was of such character or was necessarily carried on in such a manner or at such time or place as to render the actor particularly susceptible to criminal attack, such as would justify a prudent man in going armed.

(2) The weapon was carried or kept ready at hand by the actor for defensive purposes, while he was engaged in a lawful activity, and had reasonable cause to fear a criminal attack upon himself or a member of his family or upon his home such as would justify a prudent man in going armed.

(3) The weapon was being transported in a motor vehicle for any lawful purpose and was not on the actor's person,...

(4) The weapon was being lawfully transported to a school of instruction in the use of such weapons approved by the Chief of Police.

(6) The weapon was being carried from the place of purchase or repair to the owner's residence or from his business or residence to the place of purchase or repair.

Summit County, OH 549.06 (a) No person shall do any of the following: (1) Manufacture, possess for sale, sell or furnish to any person other than a law enforcement agency for authorized use in police work, any ... switchblade knife, springblade knife, gravity knife or similar weapon;

549.09 (a) No person shall carry on or about his person ... any knife having a blade two and one-half inches in length or longer, or any knife fitted with a mechanical device for automatic release of the blade, opening the knife and locking the knife in the open position, commonly known as a switch or automatic spring knife...