



**State Representative
Jack Cera**

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Cera Cracks Down on Violent Criminals

COLUMBUS-- State Representative Jack Cera (D-Bellaire) has introduced legislation that calls for a mandatory prison term of ten years for any person who uses a firearm while committing a felony.

According to Rep. Cera, the recommendation for this change in statute was brought to him during a conversation with local Jefferson County Sheriff, Fred Abdalla, and other law enforcement officials. Both the Sheriff and Rep. Cera feel the increase in a prison term for using a gun while committing a felony may help discourage the high rate of crime that involves shootings and killings.

“I appreciate the help of Sheriff Abdalla with putting this bill together and I understand the difficult job that his department and other law enforcement officers face when dealing with violent offenders,” stated Rep. Cera.

Rep. Cera went on to acknowledge that local government cuts have reduced the number of police forces across the state. “Local law enforcement officers are underpaid and departments are understaffed and still have to deal with many situations where their lives are endangered. This proposal may help get violent criminals off the streets.”

The legislation calls for a 10-year mandatory conviction if the person displays or brandishes a firearm, indicates he/she has it in their possession or uses it to facilitate the felony. It also applies if the firearm is an automatic firearm or is equipped with a muffler or silencer.

While mandatory sentencing has its opponents, Rep. Cera believes that when it comes to violent offenders, there is a clear need to make sure they remain in prison. At the same time, if it is necessary to build more prisons to lock up violent offenders, that is what the state should do to make sure the residents of Ohio are safe.

“There’s an old saying, if you are going to do the crime, be prepared to do the time. This bill now increases the time, and it involves a mandatory ten year sentence,” added Rep. Cera.