



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BECKER
HOUSE DISTRICT 65

June 26, 2018

Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee: Thank you for allowing me to offer sponsor testimony for House Bill 703, known as the Decriminalization Effort for Ending Notorious Deaths-Teachers with Options, or DEFEND-TWO.

Throughout the United States, we continue to witness tragedies in so-called “gun-free zones”, and it is incumbent upon us as Members of the General Assembly to act. DEFEND-TWO is a public safety measure that saves lives by eliminating most unsecured public sector so-called “gun-free zones” for CHL holders. Most public-sector employees with CHLs cannot be disciplined for possession of a concealed deadly weapon. For public sector so-called “gun-free zones,” the bill generally reduces penalties from felonies to M-4 when the gun owner is a CHL holder.

According to the Crime Prevention Research Center, 97.3% of mass public shootings since 1950 have occurred in gun-free zones. This reflects the reality that criminals don’t follow laws, and they know that those in gun-free zones are easy targets. Fire extinguishers exist in public buildings in the hope that they will not need to be used, but they are important tools at tenants’ disposal before the fire department arrives.

Similarly, CHL holders who carry firearms do so in the hope that they will never have to use their training to defend themselves and their community, but it is imperative that trained citizens be allowed to carry concealed and secured to prevent a mass-casualty event, or pass through security checkpoints to save lives. There are numerous stories of ordinary citizens acting with extraordinary bravery to stop criminals before they have the chance to inflict horrific terror in our communities. Please honor these heroes by supporting House Bill 703, DEFEND-TWO.

Additionally, I will offer an amendment in an upcoming committee hearing that corrects a drafting error in the as-introduced version of the bill, regarding how many security guards are required at each entrance to a public building.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of House Bill 703, and I welcome any questions or comments you may have regarding DEFEND-TWO.

Committees:

**Ways and Means
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