

## Emily Wood - Testimony for HB 228 / SB 585

My name is Emily Wood. I'm from Columbus and I'm a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I'm here today in support of HB 585. My main reason for supporting this important piece of legislation is the Red Flag provision.

My brother has struggled on and off with bipolar disorder and has gone through a period of having dangerous suicidal thoughts. During this time, we had someone with him at all times to monitor him while he was getting the proper medical care to get better. We were very lucky that our family had the manpower to keep a constant watch on him and keep him safe. It would have only taken a short time for him to go out and purchase a gun if we had not been able to provide constant watch. However, having access to a Red Flag law would put my family and my brother at ease because we would have another tool to keep him safe when he is at his lowest points and at risk of dying by firearm suicide.

Here are few statistics about suicide: Suicide accounts for nearly two-thirds of gun deaths in the United States. Between 2012 and 2016, suicide by gun accounted for 62% of all firearm fatalities in Ohio, killing over 4,000 Ohioans. On average, one Ohio resident dies by gun suicide every 11 hours. Temporarily reducing a suicidal person's access to firearms can save their life. Nine out of ten suicide attempts with a gun result in death. By contrast, most people who attempt suicide by other means live—and do not eventually die by suicide. Research also shows that access to a firearm triples the risk of death by suicide.

I believe a Red Flag law would save lives in Ohio and might save the life of my brother one day. This bill would allow family members and law enforcement officers to seek help from a court to temporarily restrict firearm access by people who pose a risk to themselves or others. When a person is in crisis, loved ones and law enforcement are often the first to see dangerous warning signs. Red Flag laws have also been shown to prevent firearm suicides; one study of Connecticut's law found that it has already averted an estimated 72 gun suicides. That's one reason that Florida, Vermont and Maryland have recently enacted Red Flag Laws with bipartisan support and at least 28 states and DC have considered Red Flag legislation so far this year.

This bill also has robust due process protections. It has a temporary order which would last 3 days – but only if the court finds clear evidence of a significant and imminent threat. Continuing orders would only be issued after notice is given and an opportunity to be heard – and the person subject to the order would have the chance to respond to the evidence presented.

For the safety and well being of my family and other like mine, I urge you to vote yes on HB 585. Thank you.



