

Good morning Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Uecker, Ranking member Schiavoni, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee. My name is Amy Lesser and I'm here to ask for your support for House Bill 228.

I stand before you today as a proud Army Wife of a Soldier who recently returned from serving overseas fighting for our country. As I thought about the year of deployment and the many challenges I faced one stood out the most. How I would keep myself safe and protected while I was alone. I can do the obvious, practice my shooting and be observant of my surroundings. But I worried about overcoming the handicap and burdens the state of Ohio places on crime victims.

As law stands now I am required to retreat or turn my back on the very person who threatens my life before I can fight to protect myself. Please try to picture this... I'm stopped at the store in the evening and approached by a man intent on raping/killing me. Why do I have a "duty to retreat" before I'm permitted to defend my life?

I often wear heels, but my attacker probably won't. Who do you think will win? Who is to judge how far I'm required to run before putting myself in additional risk? What if they are wrong? Now I ask you to put your wives or your daughters in my place. Why do we deserve to have our fate decided on how fast we can run? Or how fast a prosecutor or judge *thought* we could have run. Why is there a law placing duties on violent crime victims?

I think about my Husband as well as Police Officers, their training teaches them to stand their ground against an enemy or advance on them, never to turn their back on them. Why does Ohio law require me to do the opposite of what has been proven to be good tactics?

I'm asking you today to give me a fighting chance if God forbid my life is threatened. There is an agreed upon law about when to use lethal force. But in Ohio, I can only do that if I have first tried to outrun my attacker. As I mentioned before my only line of defense is myself. I have followed the letter of the law when I purchased my firearm as well as train regularly and carry my concealed firearm and carry permit religiously. Unfortunately no matter how much I practice or how ready I am, in Ohio, I can only protect myself once I have tried to retreat.

I hope and pray that you correct this outdated law because after a criminal forces me to defend my life from his attack, the state should not force me to defend my life in a court of law.

Thank you for listening. I will try to answer any questions you may have.