

I came here today because of how important the right to defend oneself is. I'd like to start out by telling you how I came to actively participate in my own self defense.

After my second divorce and financially recovering from that, I decided I wanted to help people train their dogs. As I didn't have enough money to rent a space for training clients in a group setting, it was necessary for me to only offer private training sessions held at the clients private residence. Little did I realize that this course of action would send me down a completely different road in my life.

My very first client was in a rural area. When I got there and pulled in, the driveway was long and shielded from view of the road. That right there made me uneasy and I still remember thinking, as I sat in my jeep, boy this is pretty isolated. But I sucked it up, got my equipment out of the Jeep and proceeded to the door. It was answered by my client, a middle aged man and he welcomed me in. After a few business formalities, I asked him where we would be training at. He said he had a nice area set up in the BASEMENT. Ok, NOT what I wanted to hear and alarm bells are going off in my head. But, keeping calm and telling him to lead the way with an expansive arm gesture, I followed him

down the stairs to the training area. Everything went fine, thank the Lord. However, when I left that day I fully realized how badly that COULD have gone. And I determined to rectify my serious lack of self defense skills. I signed up for and successfully completed a ccw class and purchased a compact pistol for carrying. However, the more I thought about situations that might arise, the more I realized that in most situations there would probably be a physical confrontation first. I started researching self defense training in Ohio and found a place that offered physical self defense training in addition to weapons training, and came highly recommended from those in the weapons community. I signed up for their class called Close Quarters Personal Control. And that's where my real education began. The instructors there are retired and active SWAT, policemen and military vet. Things I learned that I never knew were how to recognize when an attack is about to happen, situational awareness, and the one thing that floored me was this...that police are not required to help you out when you call 911. I LITERALLY HAD NO CLUE. Over the course of many classes I completed there I learned that the only person to rely on is myself. I learned in my very first class that in certain stressful situations I freeze. I didn't know that about myself but I knew I had to overcome it in order to survive a violent encounter. That particular situation for me is being choked. That has happened twice. Once at the end of my first marriage and the second time was the final straw of my second marriage. But that isn't the only thing that has happened in my life. I was assaulted at a party when I was a teenager and I was date raped in my mid 20's. During my second divorce my future ex chased me while driving my jeep, tried to run me off the road then cut me off. I called the police and the sheriff's deputy called him and told him not to do that. And yet it took that dog training appointment to open my eyes to reality. Better late than never.

It was recommended to me by one of the instructors to learn Krav Maga. I practiced Krav Maga 3 times a week for two years. I have taken CQPC I,II, III and IV twice, defensive knife training, impact weapons training and also firearms training. And thru all that, being a women, with less physical strength than a man, and age and physical limitations, the likelihood of me losing a violent encounter is fairly high. The only thing that I have in my control that can equalize those limitations is my firearm and the element of surprise. I can certainly tell you that attacks are

close and personal. The one size fits all “duty to retreat” law is extremely dangerous. The last thing anyone should need to worry about in the middle of a self defense situation is whether or not they are going to go to jail for defending themselves against an attacker. What they need to be focused on is surviving the attack and neutralizing the attacker.

Every situation is different. There is no one single reaction that fits them all and one must be able to have choices in order to survive a violent encounter.

Imminent and immediate threats must be able to be recognized and assessed in an expeditious manner, which may be just in a matter of seconds.

Actively defending yourself requires immediate and sometimes preemptive actions. Learning the signs of an imminent attack is a valuable skill to have- one that I wish many more people did have. And the reason it’s important is for the defense of yourself and those you care for.

It is not morally superior to be unprepared. It is also not morally superior for the state of Ohio to legislate only one form of legal recourse in response to an attack on one of its citizens. An attack can come in many forms but one thing is sure- it will be fast and violent. Possibly premeditated, possibly not. The reality is unpredictable and chaotic. There will be fear. Great fear, particularly for women. Exceptionally so if they are alone. The situation will be fluid and heavily stacked in the criminals favor if the law continues to require the “duty to retreat. Limiting options for self defense to running away regardless if this could result in serious injury or death has extreme repercussions for every citizen of Ohio upon whom it is imposed.

You can not impose your morals onto an attacker. If you do so, it will be to your own peril. They do not have your morals, otherwise the attack wouldn’t be happening.

Attacks are not fair, and they aren’t meant to be. How many criminals attack someone that they believe to be stronger, faster, better fighters or more well armed? I doubt many. If a citizen is targeted they have been perceived to be easy prey. One that can be taken advantage of with little enough risk that the criminal will act-and in most cases, they already know what they are going to do.

If this unjust “duty to retreat” law is allowed to continue in the state of Ohio, I consider every representative, who knowingly and willingly votes against Ohioans right to defend themselves as necessary, is complicit in the act of aggression, the physical harm and/or murder of the person who is constrained by this unjust law.