

Testimony on House Bill 796  
Civil Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
Michele Mueller

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to House Bill 796.

**Re: Opposition to HB 796**

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair, Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Michele Mueller, and I am a resident of Harrison, Ohio. I am a volunteer lead with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I came into this movement almost 8 years ago, right after the Sandy Hook mass shooting, as a grandmother extremely concerned about the safety of not just my grandchildren, but all children, and the safety of our communities. It was a pivotal moment as my 8 year old granddaughter asked me if Sandy Hook was a war and was too frightened to get on her bus to go to school. What has kept me fighting for gun violence prevention, is the everyday loss of life that kills 100 people a day, and the constant barrage of dangerous gun bills introduced in Ohio, that do nothing to help save lives, and takes Ohio in the wrong direction, year after year, at a time when Ohioans are demanding our leaders to do more to prevent gun violence.

I am opposed to HB 383, Stand Your Ground, and its sweeping rollback of public safety laws in our state. Ohio already has a self defense law, and SB 383 will upend Ohio's long standing self defense law. This bill is a solution searching for a problem. There is no need to create a culture of "shoot first, asks questions later," including no duty to retreat, even if there is a reasonable opportunity to retreat, which could save a life. Additionally, the research is clear; Stand Your Ground Laws do not deter crime. Instead they encourage armed vigilantism, disproportionately affects communities of color, and are associated with increase in homicide rates. In fact, after Florida passed Stand Your Ground, it's justifiable homicide rate tripled and was linked to a 32% increase in firearm homicides.

I am at a complete loss for why now is the time to pass a bill that would not only weaken our gun laws, but ignores the overwhelming support for laws that actually save lives, like background checks and red flag laws, bills that were introduced as a bipartisan effort in September 2019, immediately after the Dayton mass shooting, almost 15 months ago, when Ohioans were screaming "do something," do something to help save our lives, do something to prevent gun violence. We should instead focus on policies that actually reduce gun violence, that will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, and close the dangerous loopholes that exist in our gun laws now. It is time to bridge the gap of the will of the people to our lawmakers, and pass legislation that will decrease gun violence, not increase gun violence.

I respectfully urge this Committee to vote NO on HB 383

Thank you for giving me the time to hear my testimony.

Michele Mueller

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America