



## Ohio Gun Owners

Ohio's Grassroots Gun Rights Organization  
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### MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** December 7, 2020

**TO:** Members of the House Civil Justice Committee

**FROM:** Chris Dorr  
Director, Ohio Gun Owners

**RE:** House Bill 796

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Chairman Hambly, Vice Chairman Patton and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify to this committee regarding House Bill 796.

Ohio Gun Owners' members and supporters across the state of Ohio have been working hard to overhaul Ohio's self-defense laws, which, thanks to the General Assembly, are in terrible condition, since our beginning a few short years ago.

It is high time this committee deliver for pro-gun voters.

After long periods of shameful silence on the part of the Republican Majorities in the Ohio General Assembly, compromising betrayals as represented by last GA's HB228 being its only accompaniment, it is long since time for this committee to do its job and take up pro-gun, pro-self-defense legislation.

However, House Bill 796 as introduced does not go nearly far enough in addressing the very important concerns the gun-rights community has with the miserable state of our current laws.

As Ohio's biggest and most aggressive gun rights organization, we take the human right of self-defense that each and every one of our members and supporters enjoys by being born an American very seriously.

That's why we have worked with legal professionals, other Ohio gun rights organizations and pro-gun lawmakers to craft the comprehensive, full-orbed reform of Ohio's lax laws that our members deserve to see this committee and the Ohio General Assembly pass.

The culmination of those efforts can be found in House Bill 381 and its Senate companion.

As written, HB796 represents a very small portion of the rights that gun owners deserve to have restored to them by this committee.

As introduced by Republican Representative Karen Koehler (R-Springfield), it is desperately, and we hope not deliberately, lacking in several key areas:

- 1) Criminal and Civil Immunity

Lawful citizens who are forced to use deadly force for self-defense should not be victimized a second time by being prosecuted by anti-gun prosecutors or sued by the violent thug who attacked them in the first place (or the thug's family!).

- 2) Enactment language via pre-trial immunity hearing.

The victim of a violent crime should have the clear ability to prevent being victimized, by being forced to spend their life savings on attorney and court fees (which have been known to cost over six-figure sums), twice. HB796 as written does not specifically provide for these protections for lawful citizens, and it should.

### 3) Threatened use of force

The St Louis McClosky couple highlighted the importance of protecting a lawful citizen's ability to deescalate violent situations by simply threatening to use force.

And with the violence so rampant in our streets this last summer, and in all probability the summer ahead, it is painfully absent from House Bill 796 as introduced by the author.

#### **SUMMARY**

House Bill 796 represents what lawful Ohioans are quickly seeing become the "norm" from Ohio's Republican Leadership: the bottom-of-the-barrel absolute bare minimum.

After being farmed for votes in election season after election season after election season, gun owners across Ohio are very tired of being treated so unfairly by the very majorities our votes have helped put in place.

As written, HB796 needs to do far more than it does, so please amend into it the policies represented in House Bill 381 (that are mentioned above).

Be BOLD for freedom and self-defense, instead of living up to the reputation of bench-warmers that Ohio's Republican majorities have earned.