

# ***TRACY GRINSTEAD-EVERLY, J.D.***

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★ ADVOCACY ★

## ***Grinstead-Everly Consulting***

***11320 Exmoor Drive ~ Concord Township, Ohio ~ 44077***

***tgrinsteadeverly@gmail.com ~ 512.636.3110***

### **Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 796 Ohio House Civil Justice Committee December 16, 2020**

I am an attorney and social justice advocate with over 30 years of experience working to end intimate partner violence. Research demonstrates an unequivocal and deadly link between firearms and domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> Stand Your Ground laws in other states have been abused as justification for domestic violence homicides. Current Ohio self-defense law is sufficient to protect those who use deadly force legitimately.<sup>2</sup> This bill presents an unnecessary risk to Ohio families already living in fear and danger.

Intimate partner and family violence are increasing in incidence and severity. 109 Ohioans died as the result of domestic violence in the year ending June 30.<sup>3</sup> 81% of those victims were shot to death, most in their own homes.<sup>4</sup> Home is always a dangerous place for domestic violence victims, but the pandemic has compounded and escalated that risk. Even under normal circumstances, victims are 500% more likely to be killed if there is a gun in the home.<sup>5</sup> During the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic-violence fatalities in Ohio were 14% higher than during the same period in 2019.<sup>6</sup>

I urge you to oppose this bill. Home defense is already legally protected in Ohio. The real danger posed to families is not by strangers but by those who claim to love them. 1 in 3 women are abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.<sup>7</sup> 1 in 4 children are victims of abuse.<sup>8</sup> Introducing guns and giving perpetrators an excuse to use them transforms abuse to murder. Please prioritize the lives of Ohioans and vote against this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Sorenson, Susan, *Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature* (2016); Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C. R., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., Gary, F., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., & Wilt, S. A. (2003, November). *Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Revised Codes, Sections 2901.05 (self-defense) and 2901.09 (no duty to retreat in residence or vehicle).

<sup>3</sup> *Ohio Domestic Violence Fatalities, July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020*, Ohio Domestic Violence Network, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Sorenson, Susan, *Supra*.

<sup>6</sup> Ohio Domestic Violence Network, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*