

Testimony on House Bill 796  
House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by: Justin Maxwell

My name is Justin Maxwell. Born & raised in Ohio, and an Ohio State Alumn. I am strongly opposed to HB 796. Please don't do this. I am pleading. Facts, figures, survivor testimonies, and overwhelming public opposition doesn't seem to be working to change your minds, so, I am reduced to begging. Please don't pass Kill at Will.

I don't want people in Ohio to die from this bill, which will be inevitable if it passes. Passing this will desensitize residents to guns, adults and children alike. It will create permission structures to gun owners to be more aggressive with their firearms. It will put people in a perpetual state of fear, always being on edge. It will disproportionately kill Black and brown Ohioans. So, please, please, please, please, don't do this. You don't have to. No one aside from extremist gun lobbies wants this, and they only want it because it will bring about more gun violence in the state which will bring about more fear, which they hope will bring about more gun purchases. Please, don't pass a bill that is motivated by blood money. Please don't pass a bill that kills. Please do the right thing. Please don't abdicate your duty to serve and look after the wellbeing of Ohioans.

We just had a Columbus Sheriff's Deputy hunt down and lynch Casey Goodson, Jr. in broad day light for no other reason than for driving while Black. There is already such bloodlust in Ohio and in this country, please don't incentivize more of it. There is already a gun violence epidemic that is worsening across the U.S, but especially here in Ohio. While America as a whole has seen an 18% increase in gun violence, Ohio has seen an increase of over 50%. Our state is a violent aberration. I have gotten calls and texts from friends and family out of state and out of the country who say they are praying for us because they are so scared that state legislatures don't care about Ohioans. They pray for us that you don't pass any more deadly bills. They pray that not one more person will die from a gun. And it is possible to make that happen! Other countries have stopped gun violence, and we can do it, too. But it begins with not passing any more deadly bills, and instead passing gun safety bills. So, to make sure we stay safe, vote down this bill. And then, to help reduce the terror of gun violence in this state, pass extremely reasonable bills like Universal Background Checks and Red Flag Laws, bills so reasonable that my friends in other countries are in utter disbelief that we don't already have those laws. They can't believe that lawmakers in America would have such callous contempt for the people they are supposed to serve that they would not only write up, but pass bills that give citizens the right to kill each other, especially when we already have so many police and citizens that kill.

Don't you believe in American greatness? Don't you believe that America should be a safe and happy place to live? The U.S is already losing three thousand people a day to COVID. Instead of passing a gun bill that will kill even more people, please, focus your attention on stopping mass death instead. I am begging. I am praying, for the love of God, don't do this. You don't have to do this. I promise, you will be able to rest easier at night knowing that you didn't pass a bill that will get someone killed who is currently living right now. If this bill is passed, someone right now, who is living a life full of love and happiness with their family and who is bringing joy to the state of Ohio, will die as a result. Don't do that. Please. Please don't give people the right to kill other people. Please don't pass HB 796