January 21st, 2020

Senator Coley

Chairperson, Government Oversight and Reform Committee

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Re: Support for SB 182**

Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the committee. My name is Tara Talgar and I am a volunteer with Moms Demand Action. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today. Moms Demand Action is a gun violence prevention organization that advocates for strong gun violence prevention legislation. We support the 2nd Amendment and we also support safe, responsible firearm ownership paired with common sense gun policy on the federal and state level. We care greatly about gun violence as a public health issue and keeping our families and communities safe. That is why I am here today in support of SB 182 and urge each member of this committee to move forward and vote yes on this bipartisan piece of legislation that will raise the minimum age to purchase a firearm to 21 years old.

Purchasing or possessing a firearm is a task that bestows upon the owner a great responsibility. This responsibility should come with a level of maturity similar to the ones imposed upon drinking alcoholic beverages, voting and driving. Research shows that Eighteen to 20-year-olds commit gun homicides at a rate nearly four times higher than adults 21 and older. This policy can help block gun sales to teenagers who are at risk of inflicting violence with a firearm. The Parkland, FL shooter could not have gone into a gun store and bought a handgun, but he legally bought an AR-15. Florida has learned from this tragedy and has since changed its law. Common sense tells us that if we can slow a dangerously-ill teenager down there is a better chance for mental health and social interventions to work.

Firearms are the second leading cause of death among children and teens in Ohio, killing over 100 every year. Nationally, over a third of gun deaths among those under 20 are suicides, and over the past decade, the firearm suicide rate among this population has increased by 76%. With tragic gun violence events around the state still looming large over this legislature, I would hope that we can all agree that our children's safety and well-being are of the utmost importance and should be prioritized when creating and passing any legislation, especially those related to firearms.

This legislature has an opportunity this year to be on the right side of this conversation and begin to push legislation that makes our state safer and helps keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not possess them. The effects of gun violence extend far beyond those struck by a bullet: gun violence shapes the lives of the millions of children who witness it, know someone who was shot, or live in fear of the next shooting. Let us use this moment to shape their lives for the better and work to end that fear.

Thank you for your time.

Tara Talgar