



Buckeye Firearms Association

Testimony of Rob Sexton

On behalf of Buckeye Firearms Association

Before the House Civil Justice Committee

December 3, 2024, 12:45 PM

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Civil Justice Committee, I am Rob Sexton, Legislative Affairs Director for Buckeye Firearms Association.

BFA is a strong proponent of Senator Shaffer's Senate Bill 32, which would provide civil immunity for law abiding people who act in self-defense or in defense of others within a non-profit organization or at an event organized or as part of a non-profit event. This bill continues the progress made by the General Assembly to hold law breakers responsible for criminal behavior while protecting the law abiding.

Senator Shaffer previously authored, and this body enacted legislation providing this same civil immunity to non-profit organizations themselves in this same situation. Previously the General Assembly provided similar protection to for profit businesses. Now you have the opportunity to finish the job with this legislation. Senate Bill 32 passed the Senate 30-0 on November 13, 2024, leaving its fate in the hands of the Ohio House.

The need for Senate Bill 32 came into clear focus us this past Summer as we at Buckeye Firearms Association attended the 25th Annual National Firearms Law Seminar held by the National Rifle Association. Each year the NRA brings in the nation's top legal scholars who provide continuing education to attendees on the relevant cases regarding firearms. One presentation in particular addressed selective prosecution against people who had clearly acted in self-defense.

What all these people had in common is that they had acted in the defense of others along with themselves. And in return had their very freedom placed in jeopardy as a result. While Senate Bill 32 is about civil immunity the same principles apply. Being sued is a tremendously traumatizing event and can be financially catastrophic. Even those who eventually prevail haven't really won as they've incurred tens of thousands or more in legal fees and had their good names assaulted in a public forum. Instead, they have only avoided greater injury from the civil damages themselves.

Senate Bill 32 extends civil protection for people who do the right thing. We want people to do the right thing. We want lives to be saved, as we have seen countless times when someone intervenes against a murderer. And we have also seen what happens when good people do

nothing. Senate Bill 32 helps to focus responsibility for violent acts on the criminals themselves and prevents the addition of more victims who are caught up in our legal system after the fact because they acted to save lives.

BFA appreciates Senator Shaffer's perseverance on this matter and ask the House Civil Justice Committee to send this bill for consideration before the full House. Thank you.