

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nolan Woods and I am a second year law student at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. I am an avid sport shooter and hunter and have held a concealed carry permit for several years. I write you to express my profound disapproval with HF 14, HF 15, and HF 396, and urge you not to pass these bills. I fully understand the desire to “do something” in regards to gun violence when tragedies sweep across our social media feeds and the news cycle. That is a noble impulse. However, the simple fact is that crime, including regulatory gun crimes and violent crimes, are symptoms of larger problems of widespread poverty, inequity, and societal distress. These bills are not going to meaningfully reduce the amounts of gun crime experienced by our communities. However, they will meaningfully burden the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise their Second Amendment rights, and will meaningfully burden the ability of those citizens defend themselves in their home as guaranteed by the Second Amendment and well-established federal case law. Please do not give in to the desire to make hasty, reactionary policy. Just this week, the Minneapolis Police Department reported that their calls for service relating to firearms decreased 38%. The rates of violent crime in a jurisdiction correlate very closely to the economic situation within that community. As communities are pulling themselves out of this pandemic and rebuilding the economy, crime rates including gun crimes are dropping. And all of this despite the fact that the past two years through the pandemic have led to the greatest growth in firearms sales to new firearms owners in the nation’s history. I urge you again, please do not pass these bills.

Another important concern I have is specific to HF 15. Just last month we saw the police in Memphis brutally murder Tyre Nichols in the street, not even three years after George Floyd was killed here. “Red-flag” laws, as this “emergency extreme risk order” measure will certainly be referred to as, create a dangerous situation in which law enforcement is given broad authority and discretion to interact with the lives of citizens outside of the boundaries of due process. We know that we cannot

trust police to protect persons of color. We know that instances of police murdering persons of color under their badge of authority will continue. So why are we creating an avenue for them to enter the home of a person, with the preconceived notion that the person within is unstable and armed, with the intention to seize their property without a warrant or any criminal charge? The simple fact is that innocent people are going to be killed by the police directly because of this bill. Please, before taking a step like this, address the underlying issues of poverty, inequity, and insufficient mental health services for low-income persons and persons of color. I don't have answers on how to do those things. I'm sure no one person does. But working on those issues as a statewide community will have a more positive impact on the people of Minnesota than giving the police more reasons and authority to murder our fellow citizens.

In conclusion, I make my final plea that you do not pass these bills.

Thank you for your time,

Nolan Woods