

Minnesota State Legislature  
Children Finance and Policy Committee

27 February 2024

Mary Jo Baarsch, HD5A  
2640 Raven Ln NW  
Backus, MN 56435

Dear Legislators,

I am adamantly opposed to legislation that continues to thwart our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights to bear arms – including HFXXXX.

Why do we continue to create useless laws that infringe on legal gun owners' rights and uses of firearms to protect themselves and their property, while we diminish the sentences of bona fide law breakers and criminals? Why do we not analyze how to reduce the crimes against law abiding citizens by criminals? Why do we not recognize that creating additional laws does nothing to stop those that don't abide by the existing laws we have?

I live in Northern Minnesota, where a 911 call will result in significant wait time to receive any assistance or protection from a break-in or threat. We rely on our firearms to protect our property, our livestock, our families, and our pets.

Perhaps you are aware of the increased predation by wolves in Northern Minnesota? I might add, that this is also a result of a lack of understanding of the increase in the wolf population and the ridiculousness of having them protected by the Endangered Species Act. That being said, my neighbor's cattle have been killed by wolf attacks in the past few months and our pets have also gone missing or have been found mutilated by apparent wolf attacks. In Ely and in Duluth, wolves have been coming into the town and attacking pets.

In February, I had wolves directly in front of my home two days in a row, while walking my dog. So, everyday I walk my dog and I carry a handgun – loaded – with me. The wolves have been brazen and unafraid of humans, attacking a dog recently within 20 feet of its owner. How would you suggest I protect myself and my beloved dog? And now you are telling me that multiple times a day, after walking my dog, I will need to separate my gun from its ammunition and store it securely?

This is just one example I am giving you of how I use my gun daily. But what about a break-in in my home? My husband travels frequently and I am home to defend myself and my home in a remote location. I want my gun close and ready to be used. It is my responsibility to take precautions for safe use and storage, not the state and not the federal government.

I have no children in my home, we live in a remote area where most of my neighbors aren't even here in the winter. This law is ridiculous and unconstitutional. We are not the people you need to worry about. Please take care of the law BREAKERS and provide clear and known sentencing guidelines so that they know they will be dealt with in a strict way consistent with the severity of their crimes. Instead, criminals are being released early, sentencing is being reduced and they KNOW this, hence you see more crime then ever before. Law abiding citizens need their guns more today than yesterday as a result.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Baarsch, HD5A