

HF 13 TESTIMONY

Testimony of Dawn Einwalter Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America Minnesota - House Public Safety Committee Hearing Feb 26, 2025, 3:00PM

Good afternoon Chair Novotny, Committee members, and staff. Thank you for hearing my testimony today.

My name is Dawn Einwalter.

I am testifying today because HF 13 is a dangerous gun bill that will roll back current safety protections in Minnesota and make it so that individuals can use force—even deadly force—in certain situations when they can safely walk away.

I am a member of the Hamline Midway Coalition District Council Board, the City of St. Paul's Neighborhood Safety Community Council, and I am the lead for the St. Paul group of Moms Demand Action. I live in the Midway, a diverse urban neighborhood in the heart of St. Paul.

The Hamline Midway Coalition has hosted community meetings, including one attended by over 400 people, to gather input and feedback on the many challenges facing our community. As neighbors, we are looking out for one another and working together and with local agencies to address public safety problems. The Hamline Midway Coalition is working with Metro Transit, the St. Paul Police Department, the City's Office of Neighborhood Safety, and the City's Department of Safety and Inspections to address public safety "hot spots." There is now a visible and reliable law enforcement presence, and residents are engaging in clean-up crews, reporting incidents, and helping to identify care needed for their vulnerable neighbors. Our community is deeply invested in creating solutions to promote public safety for everyone but stoking fear and potentially adding more firearms into the mix would make an already volatile situation more so.

You are all probably familiar with the concept of "Stand Your Ground," which is a policy that gives people a license to kill, allowing them to use deadly force in public as a first option rather than the last, and then claim self-defense. These are actually shoot first laws because they allow people to shoot first and ask questions later. Thinking back to the tragic shootings of Trayvon Martin in Florida and Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, shoot

first laws promote dangerous vigilantism by encouraging people to use deadly violence as a first, not a last resort.

Traditional self-defense laws, like Minnesota's current existing law, do not prohibit a person from using deadly force if they believe it is necessary to protect against serious harm. It merely requires a person to take an alternative course of action when they are in a threatening situation outside of their home if they know they can safely do so. Traditional self-defense principles reflect the value of life; they recognize that it is best to avoid killing another human being if possible, while still giving a person the right to protect themselves when necessary. I urge the committee to consider whether this attempt to erode this doctrine is a solution in search of a problem.

Neighbors in the Midway are focused on looking out for one another. Trained law enforcement is monitoring our hot spot, in collaboration with actively engaged neighborhood residents. A law like HF13 would not be an advantage in the Midway but would be further destabilizing.

I encourage members of the committee to vote **NO** on **HF 13**. Reject this attempt to promote aggression and violence, and instead, retain all current provisions of Minnesota's traditional self-defense law, a legal doctrine which has protected people for centuries.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here today.