

Chair Nash, Chair Klevorn, and Committee Members,

My name is Chad Kuyper, and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3357, a bill that prohibits the possession of dangerous weapons in Minnesota's capitol complex and state buildings, with specific exceptions for law enforcement and security personnel.

I'm a long-time volunteer with the Minnesota chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I have been to the Capitol to advocate for gun sense numerous times over the years, and every time I go, it's always special. Filled with stunning architecture and reminders of the history that has shaped this state, the Capitol complex holds a special place in my heart.

Which is why it feels profoundly wrong to allow weapons designed to kill on a massive scale inside the People's House. The Capitol is a place for deliberation and policy discussions, and the presence of deadly weapons has a profound chilling effect on those activities. Democracy cannot function at the end of a barrel of a gun.

Moreover, our organization has a long history of advocating for gun reform at the Capitol. Our red shirts (and home-baked cookies!) have become a visible and reliable presence at the Capitol complex whenever gun violence is discussed. We have had to advocate for our cause alongside other members of the public who openly carry weapons of war to the Capitol, and the implicit threat communicated by the visual display of those weapons is not something anyone should have to tolerate when peacefully advocating for their cause. I know several of our volunteers are hesitant to make their voice heard at the Minnesota legislature because of the fear the visible presence of these weapons is designed to instill. Such a tactic is shameful, and lawmakers should act to put a stop to it.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3357. Thank you for considering this testimony and this urgent legislation.

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