

TESTIMONY RELATED TO GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

TO: HOUSE PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE #1

SUBMITTED BY: MOLLY VOIGT, SENIOR STATE LEGISLATIVE MANAGER &
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Chair Freitas and Members of the Public Safety Subcommittee #1 : thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony on behalf of Giffords and the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, the organization founded by former Congresswoman and gun violence survivor Gabby Giffords. I am writing in opposition to House Bill 827.

OPPOSE H.B. 827 (Wilt): This bill would prohibit localities from making decisions about public safety by preventing them from limiting guns on their properties and at permitted events. It would provide the gun industry with unusual commercial product liability immunity, and increase the number of guns in circulation by requiring guns acquired in a buy-back to be sold.

The presence of guns at the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville 2017 that lead to the murder of one young woman created a dangerous and volatile situation. Wisely, in 2021, Virginia allowed local governments to prohibit guns at permitted events and on their properties when they believed doing so was in the interest of public safety. This bill would repeal this newly enacted law and prevent local governments from making public safety decisions.

This bill would also prohibit lawsuits against the gun industry, providing guns with immunity enjoyed by no other commercial product. Civil liability plays an important role in injury prevention. Dangerous products and careless industry practices are normally held in check by the possibility of civil litigation that enables injured individuals to recover monetarily. This bill would eliminate those state-level checks and balances on the gun industry.

Finally, this bill would increase the number of guns in circulation by requiring guns acquired from a buy-back to be sold instead of destroyed. There are already more guns than people in the United States and such extraordinary numbers of and easy access to guns is the reason the US stands apart from peer nations in gun violence.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote no on HB 827.



ABOUT GIFFORDS

Giffords is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives from gun violence. Founded and led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Giffords inspires the courage of people from all walks of life to make America safer.