February 9, 2015

TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: C/O Ronald Solmes, M.M.

On behalf of my wife Karen, Myself and my fellow Correction Officers, thank you for the opportunity to address the Senate Judiciary Committee today, regarding HB-4159.

#1. In 2006, I worked at Michigan Training Unit in Ionia, where I issued a misconduct report to an inmate for Threatening Behavior. Two weeks later, my wife was taking her usual four mile walk, when a car slowed down, the window of the car was lowered and the name of an inmate was shouted out of the window of the car. The car then proceeded to the next traffic intersection, all of the occupants of the vehicle got out of the car (weapons in plain view), waiting for Karen to walk up to the intersection. Karen, fearing for her life, decided the best evasive action was to run through the woods, in the hope that she could make it home before these aggressors could reach her. Running as fast as she could, she made it home, locking herself in the house. She thought, "How could this happened to me"? So she peaked out the blinds of the window, and that same vehicle was cruising up and down the street trying to figure out what house she was in.

#2. In 2003, State Correction Officer Melissa Barber was making her rounds in Unit 3 at Ionia Maximum when she reached this one cell, whose occupant had a distain for all female officers. He immediately held up several pictures, (all the pictures were taken inside of her home). The first picture was of her bedroom, the second picture was of her children's room, the third picture was taken out the rear window of the house, showing her children playing in the back yard. He told her, "I can get you anytime I want". For months after that incident, she would come home to furniture moved, and much more.

#3. Three months ago, State Correction Officers in Muskegon were leaving a local bowling alley, having completed their bowling league games, when they were ambushed in the parking lot. There was gun fire directed at their persons.

#4. On January 13, 2012, State Correction Officer Clarence Hammond, having completed his shift at Macomb Correctional Facility paid the ultimate price, as he was on the way home, he was shot and killed. Officer Hammond did not have an exempt CPL and he was unable to defend his own life.

People, who would do these kinds of horrendous activities, are not going to honor pistol free zones.

In today's world parolees and their associates quite frankly have the advantage. With computer programs from White pages to Google Earth, an inmate that is on parole or his gang members can easily plan out an attack.

State Correction Officers are given 54 hours of handgun training, between the handgun and transportation qualification. This includes classroom instruction, hands on practical's and range time. Class room training covers law legalities, dynamic use of force, and transportation of prisoners. The practical's include simunition training; shoot/don't shoot situations, handgun retention. The classroom and range training is more in depth, than most local police officers receive.

The aforementioned are just four incidents, among numerous attacks that state correction officers and their families continue to endure. State Correction Officers simply have more exposure with convicted criminals than any other law enforcement professional.

In conclusion, I would beseech you to approve State Correction Officers to have an EXEMPT CPL, allowing them the RIGHT, to protect themselves, and their families in community.

Thank you.