

Physicians for the Prevention of Gun Violence (PPGV) is a group of 350 doctors who as our mission, are "Educated and empowered to advocate for the prevention of gun violence." We are raising our voice in opposition as scientists trained in gun deaths and injuries. We are bringing to you our concern for the right of local government. We come before you today to implore you to defeat this bill. This is undemocratic legislation.

You are the Local Government Committee. That implies that you believe in local entities and their wisdom to choose the best for each locality. It also implies that you believe that the people have kept some of their authority as citizens. Although they chose you as leaders they would not choose to be penalized for raising their voices when necessary. This bill penalizes its citizens. In gun issues this bill effectively denies a local government from making a decision on how to handle guns by penalizing it with fines and court costs. This bill then hijacks local government and stifles local control.

We have a gun problem in our country. With over 30,000 deaths a year we have 80 percent of the gun fatalities in the industrialized world (American Journal of Medicine, 2016). So local efforts to enhance gun safety should be supported. In fact, Ann Arbor (and Clio) have done exactly that. The school board in Ann Arbor wanted no guns in schools there- a position that had been the standard in the state for many years. As public health doctors PPGV know that shooting deaths in schools are 50 times¹ less likely than outside the doors so not allowing guns made excellent sense. The boards acted in the best interest of their students. With this legislation such action would have been intimidated.

Some of you on the committee believe, like most physicians, in the sanctity of life and even belong to the Right to Life movement. You then, must help us protect life. Guns don't belong in schools and the statistic above -50 times safer- is compelling that protecting students means keeping schools, hospitals, and all traditionally gun free places gun free. Don't threaten the liberty of the citizens of Michigan by using this law to frighten those who would oppose a gun in every place. Act in the tradition of Sarah Brady- a great Republican.

Jim Brady, President Reagan's press secretary was shot in the head during an attempt on the president's life. He and his wife Sarah began the Brady Campaign against gun violence and strove for universal background checks on gun purchases. At one time a friend left a loaded gun in reach of James, Jr. when he was a small child. Sarah Brady was incensed and said later "I have fought against the gun lobby and anyone else who wants guns anywhere, at anytime, for anyone."

Small government is a Republican virtue. Villages and townships know their needs. They often don't need outside management. They don't need penalties for making decisions that may be better than those of the state. Think of the Flint water crisis. The city knew its problems better than the state did. Don't punish citizens for speaking and acting locally. We can do better. Please defeat this bill.

Thank you.

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¹ U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2008 6 (Apr. 2009)