

HB 5286 – Knife Rights Act

Opposing Testimony

Good afternoon, Mr./Madam Chair. My name is _____ and I here with the Local Legislative Protection Association. I am here today in opposition to HB 5286.

Mr./Madam Chair, our country was structured in such a way that the distribution of power should be a very far-reaching net. The federal legislature applies laws that will effect every citizen of the US, the state legislature oversees issues that apply to all Michigan residences, and the local level is designed to deal with issues specific to their community. It wouldn't make sense for the Michigan state government to oversee zoning laws for Oscoda County because Oscoda County officials will be more in tune with the specific needs of those in their area. When dealing with the governance of the people, the issues closest to home should be managed by those closer to home. There are several reasons for this:

- Local entities will be able to better know the needs of their communities
- Local entities will be able to respond more quickly to community needs
- Local entities have more accountability to prevent misuse of community resources

Mr./Madam Chair, I'm all for the protection of our citizens, but this bill does not do this effectively. Instead it oversteps the local government and does more to infringe upon knife owner rights than to protect them. For example, in 2023, Detroit was considered to be one of the most violent cities in the US. There is some discrepancy in where exactly as it lands, but most studies place Detroit in the top three cities with violent crimes and homicides in the US. Given the violence, it could be understandable to impose stricter knife access in Detroit to help curb this trend. However, what would be applied in one city should not necessarily be applied to the rest of the state. The needs of one city do not necessarily translate to another.

Now, consider what would happen if this bill were passed. The bill states that no restriction stricter than what the state imposes may be made by local municipalities. At first glance it sounds like a good idea, but what happens if cities like Detroit continue to see high rates of violence? Now, if they need to crack down on knife violence, stricter restriction will have to be made at the state level. That means that any restrictions put on Detroit will apply to the entire state. Right now, if any city needed to be stricter about a knife ordinance, they can change it according to their need. There is not a pressing need for state intervention. This bill adds a level of state government oversight that is simply not needed.

As our government has become more powerful, the tendency has been to take the most restrictive means of governance possible instead of the least restrictive, and there's no reason to believe that will change any time soon. Because of this fact, the laws regarding knife restrictions will likely cater to the needs of cities facing

higher risks than those without. This bill would create far more problems than it solves as it dissolves local power in favor of the state legislature.

It is for these reasons that I urge this committee to vote no on this bill. Let us continue to respect the needs of local governments and let the citizens decide how to meet the needs of their communities.

Thank you for your time and I will happily take any questions.

Articles

Statista (December 12, 2024). Statista Research Department, *Most dangerous cities in the U.S. 2023, by violent crime rate*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/217685/most-dangerous-cities-in-north-america-by-crime-rate/>

Marcelo Pico (December 10, 2024). Mindfully America, *25 most Dangerous Cities in America Based on Homicide Rates*. Retrieved from <https://mindfullyamerican.com/25-most-dangerous-cities-in-america-based-on-homicide-rates/>