

HB-1177 Testimony To Senate Committee Hearing 3.15.19

Mr./ Madam Chair \_\_\_\_, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Amy Ross and I am here to support HB-1177 because:

My sister was going through a divorce a few years ago and her husband was drinking heavily, depressed and acting aggressive toward my sister. My sister reported those behaviors to her local police. They said she would need to provide videoed proof that he was: breaking and entering her home, after she'd changed the locks, threatening her with his gun...running her off the road, with her two little girls in the back seat, (nearly colliding by his oncoming traffic.) ~~When my sister called my mother immediately after this happened...~~ my mother, realizing that her son-in-law attempted to kill my sister and their children, acted and did things that no mother should have to do. She took it upon herself to go to my brother-in-law's home and she took his gun to her home, storing it in a place that she didn't think he would have access to, inside her own home. My mother became responsible (and was not acting within the law) but she was acting like a mother who would do anything to ensure that her daughter survived a divorce. My mother later returned the gun to my sister's ex-husband, when he stopped showing signs of danger. (This angered me because my mother had to be the one to issue judgment on whether or not he was fit to have his gun returned. And if her judgment was poor and she returned the gun to a man who would have killed my sister she would have zero daughters. It would have destroyed her and it would have been very difficult for me to get over and not hold my mom partly responsible.

This was not the first time my mom was in this position. When my sister and I were 8 and 6 years old... ~~my mom drove us over to her friends house for a visit. I was very excited to get to play with my friends, her children.~~ We walked in the house and witnessed her husband holding a gun to her head and I remember Debbie yelling at my mom, telling her to take your kids out of the house...I was thrown into shock... ~~the kind of shock that makes you forget that a man is holding a gun to his wife's head and makes you focus on getting to the business of playing...but out of this room.~~ My mother marched me and my sister and the other kids in the house back out to our car and then she went back in there. I don't know what occurred, but that man later came out to his vehicle and left. He



was drunk and they too were going through a divorce. We spent the rest of our visit helping them all pack their belongings.

When I was a 14, I went alone, to visit my Aunt, living in another city. My Aunt was thrilled to have me...when her husband left the house she told me that he had been threatening her with his gun to her head for several weeks. She told me many things that a 14 year old girl should not have to learn about her Aunt and Uncle. She told me that she was slowly putting her and the kids belongings in storage. She had to sneak items out slowly and she was planning to leave him when she could. Until I could get home, I was her insurance, for the time of my visit. It was a few days off from his abuse. I had to tell my mom and grandfather, upon returning home. About a year later we lost contact with my Aunt. She had to break contact with her family for one year...to get away. Her husband, my Uncle, had a record...he had kidnapped my cousin when my cousin was a two year old. H took my cousin to Mexico and we spent a 2 years trying to get him back. When he came back with my cousin I didn't understand why he was a free man? What helped my Aunt break free? My Uncle was part of a murder. He was paid to kill a police officer...the person who paid him, was the officer's wife who claimed he would beat her.

~~The man who Shot Deputy Parish in Douglas County showed signs of being a danger to himself and others and his own mother went to ask for help. Again, make note that a woman was asking to take away a man's guns.~~

And the man who drew his weapon on a Douglas County Deputy, during a traffic stop on August 31<sup>st</sup> of last year (2018) who was shot and killed in defense, by the deputies....had a record and warrants for his arrest. He should not have had access to guns and I would like to know more about how he was able to access guns because in my life's experience there are signs and our gun rights in the country should not supersede our right to live and survive. There are men and women and Legislators even in Douglas County, the county were I reside, and they are threatening and showing signs of danger...in fighting this bill...just like I've seen adults in divorce do. I am concerned, I am frightened with all the conflict and arguing going on around this bill. I've written and called my Senator and House Rep and told them I don't feel safe. They refuse to speak with me in person, to offer any consoling or proof of effort that they even want my community to feature safety and security. Legislators in my County chose to



incite fear further by holding a townhall in a gun shop. That took some guts for me and my husband to go to...but we did and we were poorly treated...I was taunted and treated disrespectfully, and Patrick Neville, walked away laughing at the taunting...he didn't protect me.

These are the same legislators who last September, made jokes on social media about the circumstances surrounding the sexual assault allegation facing Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh. And before that, these same legislators were caught making jokes at the behest of two women who stepped up, making a sexual assault claim here, against a Democrat Legislator. Well, my Uncle also made those same kind of jokes and so did my mother's friends drunk husband. Why are these public servants not mandated sexual harassment training? Isn't this a public safety issue...it is to me.

And recently the female Senator who threatened a news reporter, a Representative who showed herself as an irresponsible gun owner by taking her gun to the airport. The number of reports that we hear about legislators bringing their guns in here...to this Capitol...where it says no guns or weapons on every entrance! HB-1177 shouldn't have to pass for these legislators to face punishment for their behaviors.

When is this going to stop?

HB-1177 will not only save lives it will improve the lives of people who face abuse and threat.

- please vote yes on HB-1177