



Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus Written Testimony in Support of HF13

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

February 26th, 2025

Dear Chair Novotny and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the **Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus**—Minnesota’s largest state-based organization advocating for the rights of peaceable gun owners—we write in strong support of **HF13**, which reforms Minnesota’s self-defense laws by removing the judicially imposed duty to retreat.

Last year in *State v. Blevins*, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that a citizen threatened with deadly force must attempt to retreat **before** lawfully **displaying** counterforce. This erroneous decision means that victims of an imminent deadly attack must attempt retreat before even retrieving a method of self-defense. We agree with Justice Thissen’s dissent that this ruling:

"Not only is the court’s decision divorced from the statutory text and unprecedented in the United States; it also flies in the face of human nature."

Forcing someone to turn their back on a threat contradicts basic survival instincts and dismisses research showing that most defensive encounters end without injury because the mere display of a defensive measure de-escalates a violent attack.¹

HF13 clarifies that Minnesotans are not legally obligated to retreat before exercising reasonable self-defense, reverting to the plain meaning of Minnesota’s self-defense laws and correcting a judge-created doctrine. It maintains all other core self-defense elements ²:

1. The defendant must not be the aggressor or provoker.
2. The defendant must have an honest belief of imminent danger of death or great bodily harm.
3. That belief must be objectively reasonable.

¹ 2013 Institute of Medicine and National Research Council report, “Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence.”

² *State v. Basting*, 572 N.W.2d 281 (Minn. 1997) and *State v. Glowacki*, 630 N.W.2d 392 (Minn. 2001)



Opponents to HF13 claim it allows individuals to “meet force with superior force” or creates a “subjective” standard for the use of deadly force. These assertions are **unfounded**. HF13 explicitly requires using “reasonable force under the circumstances,” a standard already well-established in Minnesota law. The factfinder (judge or jury)—not the individual—ultimately decides reasonableness. HF13 does **not alter any other legal safeguards against improper use of force**.

Opponents cite studies implying that stand-your-ground laws increase homicides. However, such studies conflate correlation with causation and do not account for justifiable homicides or lawful self-defense in their analysis. A review of FBI Crime Data ³ shows:

- Among the 23 states cited in their referenced study that enacted stand-your-ground laws, 15 saw **decreases** in homicide rates in the years following the monitoring period.
- Meanwhile, 10 states **without** such laws actually saw homicide rates **increase** in that same period.

These figures undermine the notion that stand-your-ground laws inherently lead to higher homicide rates.

HF13 does not promote vigilantism. It simply eliminates a judge-made rule that requires Minnesotans to retreat when threatened with deadly force. Law-abiding citizens should not be legally obligated to gamble with their safety before defending themselves.

The Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus urges you to support HF13 and restore a self-defense framework that affirms peaceable Minnesotans’ right to defend themselves, respects human nature, and maintains Minnesota’s longstanding requirements for lawful self-defense.

In Liberty,

Rob Doar

SVP - Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus

³ *FBI Crime Data Explorer*, <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home>