

Feb 28th, 2023 Elections Cmte hearing, testimony on HB4127-4129:

My name is Cynthia Richardson and I am a lifelong Michigan resident. I'd like to thank the Committee for hearing testimony from the citizens of the state. It's my understanding that some bills may have been voted on recently without so much as a committee hearing, so again I thank you for taking the time to listen to the people who will be affected by the bills this esteemed body is considering.

I am here today to speak in opposition to House Bills 4127, 4128 and 4129.

This statement, submitted by Pure Integrity for Michigan Elections, known as PIME, comes with the support of Stand Up Michigan, Michigan Fair Elections, and the Freedom Alliance Project. PIME is a peaceful, issue-based, nonpartisan political movement. We welcome all who support election integrity and the US and Michigan Constitutions.

Beginning with HB4127/4128, I would like to start off with this astounding, yet well documented statistic. 96% of all mass shootings between 1998 and 2018 happened in areas declared as 'gun free zones' ([crimeresearch.org-mass-shootings in gun free zones](http://crimeresearch.org-mass-shootings-in-gun-free-zones)). That's **96% of mass shootings happen in areas declared 'gun free zones'. 96%!**

A mass murderer has already decided to commit a much more heinous crime, that of murder. Thinking that a 'gun free zone' sign will dissuade them is absurd, and the 96% statistic proves this point.

Criminals choose these sites because they know there will be less resistance at these locations.

Does everyone here have a driver's license? Own and drive a car? You went through certified driver's training and had to pass a test to earn that right. The CPL process is more rigorous. One has to take a class, pass a test, submit fingerprints, pass a background check and wait several weeks to be issued a CPL. CPL holders are responsible gun owners. They do not want to lose this privilege. Think about it. Anyone can buy a car even if you don't take drivers' training or pass the driver's test. This is not the case for CPL holders. Not everyone can legally purchase a firearm and not everyone is granted a CPL. Some drivers have used a car as a weapon. According to the logic of this proposed bill, one could argue cars should not be allowed 100 feet of a polling station which would violate the rights of seniors and physically challenged voters. Banning of inanimate objects is not a solution.

We at PIME want safer communities, including all polling and voting locations, and this is accomplished by letting concealed carry licensees carry their firearms if they choose. Here are a few statistics for your consideration:

- A 2013 survey of 130 researchers (80 criminologists and 50 economists) by John Lott & Criminologist Gary Mauser showed CPL (Concealed Pistol License) holders are much more law-abiding than the typical American and that allowing CPL holders to carry their firearms results in lower murder rates.
- A research study performed by David Mustard at the University of Georgia found that concealed handgun permits tend to lead to fewer police deaths.
 - ["The Impact of Law and Economics \(October 2001\): 635-657](#)
- Another study published in the October 2001 *Journal of Law Economics* found that letting law abiding citizens carry guns reduces the rate that criminals carry guns, thus making it safer for police and civilians alike.

House Bill 4127 would create a 100 foot 'gun free' zone around all ballot drop boxes. Many of these are curbside. This means anyone driving down the road or walking on the sidewalk would be committing a misdemeanor if

they carry a firearm within the perimeter. In many cases the person may not even know they are walking or driving past a drop box. This is ridiculous, especially considering that 'gun free' zones don't make anyone safer.

While PIME would like to see HB4127 and HB4128 not brought for a vote at all, at the very least, it is our opinion that these bills should have a provision to exclude CPL holders.

Lastly, both state and federal court has recently ruled against these types of prohibitions.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled on this subject just last May. The recent *Bruen* decision by SCOTUS disallows states from prohibiting the bearing of firearms in public, unless such a prohibition applies to a limited number of "sensitive places" such as courthouses and schools. In his opinion, Justice Thomas made it clear that states must not abuse the "sensitive places" exemption by applying it too broadly. The proposed legislation, at a bare minimum, abuses the "sensitive places" exemption of this ruling.

And a **Michigan court struck down this idea** in October of 2020, so why are progressives trying to push this unlawful concept again, especially in light that making an area a 'gun free' zone does NOT make it safer? ([michigan-judge-blocks-ban-on-open-carry-of-guns-at-polls-on-election-day](#))

Regarding HB4129, we absolutely cannot start making people felons if someone else says that their feelings were hurt. This is exactly what HB4129 would allow. Intimidation is already illegal. Courts have ruled on that. But this bill goes too far. It says "*Intimidate*" means to commit harassing conduct that would cause a reasonable individual to **feel** terrorized, **frightened**, threatened, harassed, or molested."

Well, **I'm frightened by this bill!** Does that make you all felons? If I say something at a voting location that offends or frightens an election official, am I now subject to felony charges, incarceration for a minimum of 1 year, and \$250,000 in fines if an election official claims they "feel" intimidated? We cannot start prosecuting people based upon other people's feelings. Besides violating the 1st amendment of our Constitution, this sort of legislation can open doors for groups of people to be attacked for their beliefs (poll watchers and challengers come to mind). We already have laws preventing intimidation and assault. We have legal methods in place to handle difficult individuals at polling locations or anywhere else for that manner. HB4129 needs to be struck down entirely. If not, we have to question if this bill's actual intent is to discourage honest, hardworking citizens from exercising their duty to oversee fair elections.

I'll close with the statistic stated earlier, 96% of mass shooting occur in 'gun free' zones, **96%**. Expanding 'gun free zones' to include voting locations will only make them more dangerous.

Please do NOT bring these bills to a vote, and if you do, please provide an exclusion for CPL holders.

We want people to be SAFER in their communities, not LESS SAFE. And we want our freedoms of expression and the right to bear arms to be preserved. Please do not approve this affront to the First and Second Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

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