



Published on *East Lansing Info* (<https://eastlansinginfo.org>)

Home > State Bill Aims to Stop Local Gun Control

State Bill Aims to Stop Local Gun Control ^[1]

Thursday, March 10, 2016, 12:13 pm

By:

Alice Dreger



The same Republican-led Michigan House of Representatives committee that has been looking into effectively ending Michigan's historic districts ^[2] and also taking away East Lansing's ability to restrict rental property redevelopment ^[3] is now seeking to take away all Michigan municipalities' ability to locally restrict the carrying and discharge of firearms.

The bill, known as HB-4795 ^[4], led to the expression of much frustration and fear at East Lansing's City Council meeting last night. City Attorney Tom Yeadon explained to Council that the bill is designed to essentially terrify local elected officials into doing nothing other than repealing any existing local gun restrictions and not attempting to take up any new restrictions.

If the bill becomes law as written, any local elected official (for example, an East Lansing City Council member) who attempts to pass a new restriction on guns would become personally liable for up to \$5,000. The law would also prevent any public money from being used in the defense of

that elected official. The elected official would become personally responsible for all the legal costs involved, including having to pay the other side's legal charges.

Yeadon explained at last night's meeting, as well as in a memo ^[5] submitted in conjunction with the meeting, that if the bill passes, the City will have no real option other than to repeal any existing ordinances that might set off the penalties described in the bill, and to not attempt to pass any new ones. The way the bill is designed was described as consisting of "super-preemption," meaning it attempts to stop local governments from even considering doing anything against the will of those in power at the State level, in this case, pro-gun-rights Republicans.

Linda Brundage, Executive Director of the Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, spoke "in total opposition" to the bill during Public Comments last night. Brundage warned Council that if this bill passes, "any kind of regulation involving firearms, even the most mundane, would become too risky."

Brundage told Council this is a "gun-lobby driven bill" specifically designed to make money for attorneys associated with the National Rifle Association (NRA). She said she and others tried to testify against the bill at the hearing held at the House Local Government Committee, but that many in opposition were effectively silenced at that hearing.

Representative Lee Chatfield ^[6], a Republican representing the region of Cheboygan and Mackinac Counties, is the lead sponsor on the bill and Chair of the House Local Government Committee. According to Brundage, Chatfield let the first word and "most airtime" go to an NRA spokesperson.

Mayor Mark Meadows reminded Council that "this is the same committee we've been dealing with on a number of issues," an allusion to the bills aimed at gutting local control of historic districts and rental property zoning. Meadows told Council that Chatfield is "an NRA-endorsed candidate" who might be holding a hearing on HB-4795 "as a tip of the hat to his funders."

Wearing a "Moms Demand Action" ^[7] t-shirt, Cathy Allen also spoke to Council, saying she was "appalled by the language of the bill." Allen also attended the House hearing and confirmed Brundage's account that opponents of the legislation were not allowed to speak up the way proponents were. As a resident of East Lansing for 28 years, she called on everyone in the City to speak out against this bill.

Councilmember Erik Altmann asked if a bill like this would violate his right to free speech. Yeadon called the idea an "interesting question" but suggested it would have to be fought in court, and reminded Altmann the bill prohibits public money from being used to help elected officials fight the State on this. Yeadon described the way this was written as "putting you in a box."

City Manager George Lahanas asked Council to indicate what he should convey to the City's lobbyist about Council's position on this bill. He asked, "What is your will?"

Councilmember Shanna Draheim responded, "You know our will." Council's discussion indicated all four members in attendance are strongly against the bill. (Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier

was absent from the meeting.)

Brundage noted that on Sunday, March 20, at 7 p.m., there will be a showing of the film *Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA* [8] at Hannah Community Center. This is being co-sponsored by her group, the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church, and the East Lansing Film Festival. Later, in her Councilmember report, Susan Woods who is also Executive Director of the East Lansing Film Festival encouraged all to attend the film.

Related Categories:

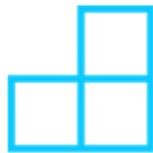
City Council [9]

Community [10]

Government [11]

Public Safety and Crime [12]

ELi is a member of INN and LION Publishers



**Institute for
Nonprofit News**



This news is brought to you by our financial supporters!

Source URL: <https://eastlansinginfo.org/content/state-bill-aims-stop-local-gun-control>

Links

[1] <https://eastlansinginfo.org/content/state-bill-aims-stop-local-gun-control>

[2] <http://eastlansinginfo.org/content/state-legislation-could-undo-el-historic-districts>

[3] <http://eastlansinginfo.org/content/house-local-government-committee-considers-bill-sought-east-lansing-landlords>

[4] <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/%28S%28zz3vcnsiuymdxih53rpauge%29%29/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&object=HB-4795>

[5] http://eastlansing.granicus.com/MapView.php?view_id=2&clip_id=585&meta_id=35802

[6] <http://gophouse.org/representatives/northernmi/chatfield/>

[7] <http://momsdemandaction.org/>

[8] http://www.bravenewfilms.org/mak_feature

[9] <https://eastlansinginfo.org/citycouncil>

[10] <https://eastlansinginfo.org/community>

[11] <https://eastlansinginfo.org/government>

[12] <https://eastlansinginfo.org/safety>