

House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Andrea Platt. I am a professional, wife, mother and a volunteer for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Gun violence is a theme that has snaked through my life, from the loss of a friend to suicide by gun to discharged weapons in public places that my children were visiting.

But by far most grievous, 18 years ago, my cousin shot and killed a man and critically wounded his ex-wife during a domestic violence incident that spun out of control. He is now on Death Row in Oklahoma.

It is my ongoing and deep empathy for his victims and their families that compels me today. My cousin's estranged wife had a restraining order against him. Yet, he bought a gun and took it to her workplace, where he threatened her and chased her through the building. When her boss intervened to protect her, my cousin shot and killed the man before critically wounding his ex-wife. The victims' families have born unimaginable suffering. My cousin's children, now adults, still grapple with this horrible reality.

Currently, the law treats abusive dating partners and domestic partners differently. Even when a restraining order exists, an abusive dating partner can pass a background check while an abusive domestic partner will not. The data shows that both partner types are equally dangerous but our current law has not kept up with the times.

In the U.S., at least 50 women are shot and killed by current or former intimate partners every month. One in three of us will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. And if our violent partner has a gun, we are five times more likely to die. One study shows that nearly 9 in 10 attempted murders of women involved at least one incident of stalking in the year prior to an attempt. With so much correlation between domestic violence and gun violence, we must act.

HB 4145 bill will close these nonsensical loopholes and will alert law enforcement officials that further investigation may be warranted – helping to prevent other families from the horrific aftermath like that inflicted by my cousin. I urge you to vote yes to make sure our background check system protects all victims of domestic violence equally.

Thank you,
Andrea Platt