

Lauren Bennett – Statement to the McHenry County Board
February 21, 2023

Hello, My name is Lauren Bennett and I was shot multiple times on the 4th of July in Highland Park.

On that morning, I attended the Highland Park parade with my family. This included my husband, my two youngest sons, my parents and my husband's parents.

Sitting at a 4th of July parade in Highland Park, which has always been a place of safety, I would have never imagined that the turbulent sound I heard and hail of concrete fragments and shrapnel I saw, was actually a maelstrom of bullets from a Smith and Wesson M-and-P-15.

Within the first few seconds, while most people were unaware what was happening, I was hit for the first time. I felt a tight shock in my back and hip and saw my entire lower left side was bleeding. I knew right then we were under attack. At that precise moment, I assumed I was a target, and maybe I was, because when I got up to run I was hit again by another bullet that deeply cut through my upper back.

For those who have never felt a bullet rip through your skin, let me explain how it feels, imagine a hot metal dart-like projectile tearing through your body at a supersonic speed, faster than the speed of sound. You'll feel it burn through your skin, and feel excessive amounts of blood draining out of you and soaking everything. At this point, you most likely feel as if you are dying, maybe wondering if this is how it all ends, I can assure you that is what I was thinking. In total, I had one bullet enter my lower back and exit out of my left hip. The second bullet tore through my upper left back, penetrating deep into my skin.. Numerous pieces of shrapnel from this bullet also pieced my upper left arm.

My family ran through bullets, jumped over fallen bodies, while two of my sons were running behind me, looking at my blood soaked body, assuming their mother was probably bleeding to death. We survived in a battle zone that day, and will carry the most horrendous images with us for the rest of

our lives. We continue to suffer and our lives are now fundamentally different in every regard.

That morning, in a matter of minutes, the most basic, unalienable human rights were taken from me, my family, and countless others— the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These are written in the **preamble** to the first sentence of the United States' founding document, the Declaration of Independence which was signed in 1776, a full 15 years before the 2nd Amendment was written. What is more important? The first and most basic right of ALL peoples? Or the right to own weapons of mass destruction that didn't even exist when the 2nd amendment was ratified?

Our most basic right granted to us before all else was ripped away from me that day. I should not have to live in constant fear so a few individuals can own weapons that only belong on a battlefield. These particular weapons are guaranteed to kill, mutilate, and massacre hundreds of people within seconds. We should ALL be protected from this. Because our right to live comes before everything else.

In closing, I respectfully request you attach my following statement to your resolution:

I, Lauren Bennet, am a survivor. A member of a small minority of people in the country who were shot but not killed by a shooter armed with an AR-15 style, Semi Automatic weapon. This proposed resolution, opposing the prohibition of the sale and possession of these types of weapons puts us all at risk. This is regrettable to say the least. The politicians who support this resolution are placing all people's lives, and all of our safety at risk.

Thank you