

Thank you Madame Chair

My name is Kyle Rittenhouse.

Many of you may be aware of the situation that occurred on August 25th, 2020 - when, as a 17-year-old, I was forced to defend my life and as a result, became thrust into a media frenzy and legal battle, I could have never prepared for.

We were all impacted by the events taking place on the world stage in 2020 ... but allow me to remind you of what took place in the media and communities the months preceding the event that changed my life forever.

As the entire world was being immersed in the uncertainty, turmoil, and fear of the pandemic - Americans were beginning to pivot and react to the effects the new Covid restrictions was having on our way of doing life, our jobs, incomes, businesses, and families. Simultaneously, the media was cultivating more and more anti-gun press. In March we witnessed the protests after the Breonna Taylor incident in Louisville, KY. In May, rioting and violence broke out in communities all around the nation because of the George Floyd incident. So, when a police incident happened in my hometown of Kenosha Wisconsin involving police officers shooting Jacob Blake, a young black man in the back **7 times**, our normally quiet community quickly erupted into chaos, violence, and riots.

To protect a friend's livelihood and used car inventory, I was asked to come in and help guard the parking lot with Mr. Black and Mr Smith

As I was protecting this dealership as well as neighboring businesses by putting out fires and providing first aid to those in harm's way, I was viciously attacked.

I testified in court - Mr. Rosenbaum was the first person to approach, threaten and attack me that night. He had been taunting, provoking, and yelling things such as "if I catch any of you alone, I'm going to kill you". It wasn't long before he did just as I was trying to extinguish a car fire. He began to run towards me, throwing objects at me. I first attempted to de-escalate the situation, quickly realizing it was futile and fled. Mr. Rosenbaum pursued me and once he realized I was cornered and had nowhere to run - he confronted me and attempted to steal my gun. It was at this point that I was forced to defend myself.

This is when the rest of the mob turned their attention to me, so I began running towards the police line at the edge of the rioting. As I ran for my life - People from the mob were screaming things like "Get him" "kill him" "cranium that boy". It all happened so fast but as I ran towards help, I was

approached by Mr. Grosskreutz who asked, "where are you going" to which I replied, "to the police". I was struck in the head from behind with a skateboard by Mr. Huber. Another man who was wearing a white tank top hit me in the back of the head with an unidentified object causing me to stumble and hit the ground.

Once on the ground - I was immediately kicked in the face by a guy, referred to during the trial as a jump kick man. To defend myself from his assault, I was able to fire 2 shots off, missing him. Mr. Huber continued to repeatedly strike me in the head with the skateboard while attempting to pull my gun away from me. I was again forced to defend myself against his assault.

After gathering myself, I continued in the direction of the police and was again confronted by Mr. Grosskreutz. This time he was brandishing a pistol. In defense, I pointed my gun at him. He put his hands up while still holding the pistol in his hand. As I lowered my gun, Mr. Grosskreutz lunged toward me, dropping his hands, and aiming his pistol directly at my head. I was forced to defend myself for a third time.

After being assaulted and defending my life multiple times, I was finally able to reach the police line. I approached an officer in a police car with my hands up to convey I was not a threat. I attempted to tell him what had just taken place but was immediately told to get away from the car, out of the riot area, and go home.

After arriving home, I told my family what had happened and went to the police station to disclose the situation, to do what I believed was the right thing to do. I was immediately arrested and charged before any questioning took place, evidence was collected, or additional information was made available.

Because of the events that had taken place in the months before this incident, the media jumped at the opportunity to push their anti-gun message and therefore, my case was immediately thrust into the public eye. As a result of the media exposure, thousands were made aware of my situation and I received support from people who saw the situation for what it was, (An attempt to take away our nation's 2nd amendment rights). People came to my aid in many ways including financially donating to my legal defense fund.

I realize that not everyone has the opportunity to receive this kind of support and I feel extremely blessed. Most people who are forced to defend themselves or their loved ones' lives from a violent situation - often end up losing their jobs, homes and livelihoods just trying to further defend themselves through the court process.

For me personally, this entire process often felt like being thrown into a nightmare I couldn't wake up from and has impacted every aspect of my life – including my decision to relocate from Wisconsin to Texas.

HOUSE BILL 1213 was created to protect the innocent lives of those who are forced to defend themselves during a violent situation, at no choice or fault of their own.

The intent behind what is being referred to or known in other states as "KYLE'S LAW" is to prevent the acquitted from losing everything they have worked their entire life for. It would also allow their life to be restored as much as possible. It is hoped that the courts will pause before reacting – now knowing the courts and their legal representatives are putting the state in a position of Financial Responsibility for reparations if due diligence isn't taken and innocents are wrongly charged.

I believe that if this bill had been in effect on August 25th, 2020 – my story might be very different. The Officers or District Attorney might have paused to gather the facts before charging me without having probable cause, evidence, and all the facts first. Just that moment to pause and act with due diligence could have avoided the lengthy legal situation that their actions set into play. However, without accountability, the courts are allowed to thoughtlessly impact the lives of your citizens without recourse or consideration.

Madame chair and Distinguished committee members.

It is my mission to use my experience and story to speak on behalf of our God-Given rights to self-defense, and fair representation.

I believe you have a tremendous opportunity before you, *to right the ship* if you will. - with a vote in FAVOR of HB 1213. This law will identify a "checks and balance of fairness, Justice and power" on behalf of North Dakota citizens who would otherwise end up as collateral damage in the wake of a court system that has grown numb and desensitized to the ramifications of its actions. Citizens who otherwise would have no voice without your support.

I ask you to consider supporting HB 1213 as a defender of our God - Given Rights to keep and bear arms as defined by the Bill of Rights in the 2nd Amendment of our Constitution.

Rights belonging to YOU, your loved ones, and every citizen in the great state of North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and your support of this critical piece of legislation by voting in favor of HOUSE BILL 1213

