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May 16, 2017

Michigan House Judiciary Committee
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Re: SB 245

Dear Chairman Runestad and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The American Knife & Tool Institute (AKTI) is a non-profit 501(c)6 organization which represents all segments of the knife industry and knife users, promoting reasonable and responsible knife legislation and enforcement. We believe that law-abiding citizens should be able to carry their essential and valuable tools without the fear of arbitrary, inconsistent and ineffective governmental restrictions.

AKTI heartily endorses SB 245. We believe that SB 245 will be beneficial to all citizens in the State of Michigan.

Existing knife laws in Michigan create an outdated legal construct that unnecessarily limits the ability of Michiganders to carry an automatic knife for daily work and recreational activities. While the Michigan Penal Code rightfully limits the possession of knives by an individual with criminal intent (Michigan Compiled Laws (M.C.L.) Section 150.226(1)), law-abiding, well intentioned Michiganders such as tradesmen, hunters, hikers, farmers, fishermen, and campers risk arrest simply by possessing an automatic knife.

M.C.L. 750.226(A) criminalizes the sale or possession of a switchblade (herein after referred to as an automatic knife) as "any knife having the appearance of a pocket knife, the blade or blades of which can be opened by the flick of a button, pressure on a handle or other mechanical contrivance." It should be noted that the exemptions to this provision include "any one-armed person carrying a knife on his person in connection with his living requirements," law enforcement, corrections officers and military personnel. Additionally, this same section of the Michigan Penal Code codifies that an individual in possession of an automatic knife shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

This language has led to inconsistent arrests and prosecutions across the state, especially of Michiganders who are not committing any criminal activities with their automatic knives, instead, simply carrying an automatic knife for a professional or recreational activity. SB 245 will remove the ban on automatic knives and ensure that law-abiding citizens and visitors are not criminalized for possession and carry of a tool, essential and valuable to occupations and recreational activities. We respectfully encourage passage of SB 245.

Sincerely,

Jan Billeb, Executive Director
on Behalf of the Board of Regents

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jan Billeb

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