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Madison Alcohol, Licensing, and Review Committee
City of Madison
215 Martin Luther King Blvd
Madison 53713

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am Anthony Cooper Sr., CEO and Founder of Focused Interruption, an organization dedicated to violence prevention and community healing. I am writing to bring your urgent attention to a critical issue affecting our city: the deadly intersection of alcohol misuse and gun violence.

Alcohol misuse and gun violence are two of the most pressing public health crises facing Madison today. When combined, they create a hazardous environment—where impulsive decisions, impaired judgment, and easy access to firearms result in tragic and often fatal consequences. Data from across the nation, along with local experiences, confirm that alcohol significantly contributes to violent incidents involving guns. Alcohol reduces inhibitions, impairs decision-making, and escalates conflicts, drastically increasing the risk of serious injury or death when firearms are present.

Sadly, many of these incidents occur in neighborhoods already burdened by poverty, systemic inequities, generational trauma, and limited access to support services. The aftermath leaves survivors with long-term physical, psychological, and emotional scars, shattering families and destabilizing entire communities. These tragedies are not isolated—they perpetuate cycles of violence, fear, and grief that echo through generations.

Addressing this complex issue requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. I urge the committee to reconsider how alcohol licenses are issued, especially in areas disproportionately affected by violence. It is essential that licensing decisions prioritize community safety, enforce strict operating standards, and consider public health impacts. Business owners must be held

accountable—through staff training, respecting closing hours, and preventing over-serving—to reduce the likelihood of alcohol-fueled violence.

Furthermore, I call for increased investments in trauma-informed violence intervention programs, community outreach, and restorative support services. Only through sustained, collaborative efforts among policymakers, public health leaders, law enforcement, community organizations, and residents can we effectively break the cycle of violence and build safer, healthier neighborhoods.

The human cost of inaction is immeasurable. I implore the committee to take decisive action now, to protect and uplift all members of our community.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to the safety of Madison.

Sincerely,

Anthony Cooper Sr.
CEO & Founder, Focused Interruption
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