



The Kid Experts™

March 23, 2023
Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SF1116 and SF1117 FROM DR. MARC GORELICK, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AT CHILDREN'S MINNESOTA

Chair Latz and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony to express Children's Minnesota's support for SF1116 and SF1117, policies that would make important strides in protecting Minnesota children from gun violence.

In 2020, for the first time, firearm-related injury became the number one cause of death for children and teens in the United States. Children are shot at home, at school, in their neighborhoods. Every single day of the week, a gun kills a child age 12 or younger. This shocking statistic is more than a number. It is an unacceptable reality and something *must* be done. Right now, Minnesota has an opportunity to lead the way by passing legislation that would protect our kids.

I spent nearly 25 years as a pediatric emergency medicine physician and now lead the largest pediatric healthcare system in the state. My colleagues and I serve kids from across Minnesota and the surrounding region. I have seen first-hand the devastating effects of gun violence on children and their families.

I have seen shattered bodies like these:

- A teenage boy bleeding to death after he was shot by a friend following an argument over a phone, his limbs swollen grotesquely from the fluid pumped into his body in a desperate attempt to keep up with the blood pouring from the wounds in his chest and belly, his color fading, and the bleeding eventually stopping when his heart stopped
- A 7-year-old girl with pieces of her shattered femur sticking through her skin after a stray bullet went through her leg while she was riding her bike
- A 13-year-old girl whose face was all but destroyed when she tried to take her own life with her father's shotgun, one eye gone and the other severely damaged, crying for her parents through the half of her mouth that remained

Thank you, Senator Latz, for crafting legislation that reflects the urgency of this moment and aligns with policies that the American Academy of Pediatrics has long been advocating.

These bills will protect children in our state. These bills will save lives.

Dr. Marc Gorelick
President and Chief Executive Officer
Children's Minnesota



MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR MINNESOTA

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March 21, 2023

Dear Senate Judiciary and Public Safety committee members,

On behalf of our more than 3,100 current and future family physician members, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians calls on Minnesota policymakers to take meaningful steps to protect our patients and communities by passing SF 1116 and SF 1117 to address the public health epidemic caused by firearms death and injury.

It is unacceptable that on average ninety-six Americans are killed every day with a gun and that at least twice that number are injured. As physicians, the members of MAFP are committed to addressing the gun violence epidemic and encouraging our communities to work together to find meaningful solutions to ensure that guns do not fall into the hands of those who wish to harm themselves or others, while respecting safe and responsible gun ownership. Measures such as criminal background checks on all purchases and transfers/exchanges of firearms and extreme risk protective orders, that allow family members a mechanism to temporarily remove firearms if there is a concern that an individual will harm themselves or someone else, are common sense gun violence prevention measures that are overwhelmingly supported by Minnesotans.

Thank you for hearing these and other measures to address gun violence. We look forward to engaging with you and your colleagues and appreciate our shared commitment to the health of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Alexis Vosooney, MD
President, MAFP

March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Latz and members of the committee,


In June of 2022, leaders from Minnesota health care systems came together to declare gun violence a public health crisis and pledged to work to prevent the deaths of people of all ages and backgrounds. As part of our ongoing commitment to ending gun violence we urge legislators to utilize the 2023 legislative session to take meaningful policy actions to eliminate gun violence in our communities, including firearm safety and gun violence prevention.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were more than 45,222 firearm-related deaths in the United States in 2020, with roughly 24,292 of those deaths resulting from suicide. That same year, guns became the leading cause of death for children and teenagers. The 45,222 people that were lost to gun violence and gun-related suicide are not just numbers. They are our family members, our neighbors, our colleagues, and our fellow community members.

In Minnesota, in 2021, the number of Minnesotans dying from gun violence rose to its highest level in 20 years. Gun homicides have more than doubled between 2018-2021, and suicides account for nearly two-thirds of all gun deaths.

As health care providers, we have a unique and often heartbreaking first-hand look at the devastating effects gun violence has on our communities, including the dire consequences secondary trauma has on our employees. What may be most painful is knowing that gun violence and its impacts are preventable. This is an issue that touches every corner of our state. The time to act on gun violence is now.

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CHILDREN'S


Minnesota Hospital Association



March 21, 2023

Senator Latz, Chair
Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Latz and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ryan Jelinek and I am a physician at Hennepin Healthcare and a board member of Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity, a nonprofit organization representing over 300 health care professionals dedicated to using their voices, knowledge, and influence to eliminate the inequities that exist in Minnesota, with a particular focus on advocating for policies that advance tangible steps toward equity and meaningful change.

Health care providers witness the senseless agony of gun violence every day in the United States, both the acute needs, and the long-term psychological impact on survivors, families, communities and on the health care workers who care for survivors. With an estimated 400 million guns in the country, the rising numbers of deaths by gun violence are not expected to decrease soon. Each year, an average of 45,000 people die by a firearm. All injuries and deaths by firearms are an unnecessary tragedy, leaving a wake of emotional, physical, and financial pain for survivors, families, and the healthcare workers who treat them. These events do not impact our country equally. Black men in this country are 17 times more likely to be killed with a gun by someone else, and white men are six times more likely to kill themselves. Gun violence has become the leading cause of death among children, and 13 children die every day from guns.

Health care providers are working to reduce gun violence by educating the community on gun safety, providing care for survivors and families, and supporting legislative efforts to increase research on gun violence prevention, and evidence-based interventions to stop the rising tide of gun violence in our communities. But we need policymakers to act to decrease gun violence and save lives today.

Therefore, I am writing today to offer strong support for SF 1117 and SF 1116 and urge their swift passage. This legislation would help prevent further gun violence and stem the tide on this worsening problem that is compounding health disparities for the Minnesotans most impacted by the many inequities that exist in our state. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ryan Jelinek DO , Board Member at MDHEQ
Chair of Gun Violence Workgroup

Co-Signed By:
Cuong Pham, MD, MDHEQ Board President
David Hamlar, MD DDS, Board Member at MDHEQ
Elizabeth Rogers MD, Board Member at MDHEQ
Paul Strain, MD, Board Member at MDHEQ

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing to voice my unqualified support for SF1116 and SF 1117. This suite of firearm safety legislation is a crucial and overdue step in advancing the safety of Minnesotans.

As a family physician practicing in Coon Rapids, I am appalled that firearm deaths are now the leading cause of child mortality in the US and at the combined toll of community gun violence and suicide by firearm on our communities..

There are many other factors that may increase the risk of an individual harming themselves or others with firearms. These include intimate partner violence, recent job or relationship loss, drug or alcohol abuse, dementia or cognitive impairment and depression. In appropriate high-risk situations, the ability to remove firearms from a person with demonstrable risk of harming themselves or others can be lifesaving. The implementation of extreme risk protection orders as proposed in SF 1117 arms law enforcement and the judiciary with a critical tool for mitigating violence in our communities, especially against our most vulnerable citizens. Such a surgical approach strikes an appropriate balance between the right to keep and bear arms and an individual's right to be free from violence, coercion, threats and intimidation.

Doctors receive vast amounts of training and are scrutinized closely to obtain and maintain our authorization to practice medicine. This is appropriate because of the great potential of our decisions both to help and to harm. The potential to harm is wielded widely by gun-owners, but often with zero or minimal training or scrutiny. SF 1116 and its expansion of requirements for criminal background checks in the setting of firearm transfers removes a dangerous gap in our current net of gun safety measures.

I am encouraged that Minnesota's lawmakers are taking action to protect their communities and to stem the public health crisis of gun violence. I implore you to support SF 1116 and SF 1117 and to move these critical pieces of legislation onward to passage and implementation. This is good medicine for Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Mary Tschida, MD
Family Medicine
Brooklyn Park, MN

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

As a family physician, St. Paul resident, and concerned aunt of 4 school-aged children in the St. Paul Public Schools, I am testifying in strong support of Senate Files 1116 and 1117. Gun violence is a public health crisis. The facts are startling: Firearms are now the number one killer of children in our country.¹ In Minnesota over two thirds of firearms deaths are by suicide², disproportionately affecting white men in Greater Minnesota. The rates of firearm suicide by young people in their teens and twenties, particularly young people of color, have been rising over the past decade nationwide.³ Firearm homicides continue to disproportionately affect communities of color, with Black people being 10 times more likely than white counterparts to die of firearm homicide.⁴ Domestic abusers in the U.S. are 5 times more likely to kill their female victim if the abuser has access to a firearm.⁵ And the list goes on.

Our gun violence public health crisis is complex and requires action on many levels. While no one law will prevent every firearm injury or death, SFs 1116 and 1117 will contribute in important ways. SF 1116 will help close the loophole in federal law that allows people who cannot pass a background check to purchase firearms from an unlicensed seller with no questions asked. SF 1117 will provide families and law enforcement a much-needed tool to temporarily separate people known to be at risk of harm to self or others from firearms. Together, these bills will help keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers, suicidal loved ones, and would-be violent criminals. These bills will save lives.

For far too long, obstruction has prevented our state leaders from passing common-sense gun safety bills like SFs 1116 and 1117. Minnesotans have been waiting years for these actions, and meanwhile the human and financial toll of the gun violence epidemic has continued to grow. The time is now for the Minnesota Legislature to take action to help turn the tide on the public health crisis of gun violence. Passing these bills will be a significant step in that direction.

Thank you very much for working to make our communities safe places to live and raise the next generations of Minnesotans.

Emily Benzie, M.D.
Family Physician
St. Paul, MN

¹ Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (2022). A Year in Review: 2020 Gun Deaths in the U.S. Available: <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/gun-violence-solutions>.

² <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/mnvdrs.html> (last accessed March 22, 2023)

³ <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/02/firearm-suicide-rate-cdc-data-teen-mental-health-research/>

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety, "Impact of Gun Violence on Black Americans," available at <https://www.everytown.org/issues/gun-violence-black-americans/> (last accessed March 22, 2023).

⁵ Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (July 2003): 1089–97, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089>.

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

I am a Family Physician, a mother and I have a degree in Public Health. I am strongly in support of these two bills.

As a mother I have experienced the fear of my children's schools being on lockdown.

As a physician I have had countless patients touched by gun violence. I have sat with mothers who have lost children due to gun violence. These laws will save lives. Period. Studies show similar laws have been effective in preventing homicide and also preventing suicides. I work in a Community Health Center. Our neighborhoods are reeling from gun violence. I know that these laws won't eliminate gun violence, but they will be an important first step in assuring safety. I also know that outside of the cities, suicide by firearms is a growing problem. The ability for police, families, teachers and healthcare professionals to act when we become aware of extreme risk and remove guns before situations escalate will be life-saving. I urge you to support these bills.

Sofia Ali, MD, MPH

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

As a gun violence survivor, my family has a profound understanding of the urgency of keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

My youngest brother, Phillip "Pip", shot and killed himself with the hunting gun given to him by our grandfather. My brother, like so many men in Minnesota, turned to his gun rather than getting help in a crisis and our family lives with the regret of what might have been. We know that an average of one Minnesotan dies by gun suicide every day, most of them white men like my brother.

My husband's nephew, Ronny, was killed at the age of 12 when playing at a neighbor's house in rural Minnesota. The neighbor boy took his older brother's shotgun, pointed and shot, killing Ronny in front of his younger brother. This death was found not to be an accident, and the neighbor boy was sentenced to juvenile detention. This boy should never have been allowed access to a loaded gun, not only because of his age but because of his personal history. The ripple effect of Ronny's death were devastating to his family.

The tragedies in my family have made me an activist, and I have spent countless volunteer hours spreading the message of gun safety in schools, living rooms and church basements. But the reality is we cannot make progress on preventing gun deaths in Minnesota until we have laws in place to keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

No law can ever bring Pip or Ronny back to life, and no one action can save every life, but I am asking you to support both SF 1116 Background Checks and SF 1117 Extreme Risk Protection Order to help Minnesota families protect the people they love.

Marit Brock
Saint Paul, MN
Senior Fellow
Everytown Survivor Network

Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Chair: Senator Ron Latz

S.F. 1116 & S.F. 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM

1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

As a responsible firearm owner (hunter), Family Physician, and Minnesota resident, I am writing in support of MN Senate Files 1116 and 1117. With the ever-increasing occurrences of gun violence in our communities, it is clear that steps need to be taken to reduce and address this significant problem. Gun violence in all of its forms needs to be addressed to help keep all Minnesotans safe from things like suicide, domestic violence, accidental shootings, and violent crimes. I support the right of Minnesotans for gun ownership and use of firearms for activities like hunting or recreational shooting. I also see the need for universal background checks on all firearm purchases and extreme risk protection orders to start the work of reducing gun violence in our state. Thank you for the work you do and are doing to keep Minnesotans safe.

Take care,

Dr. James Benzie

Family Physician

West St. Paul Entira Family Clinic

21 March 2023

1064 Cleveland Ave. S.
St. Paul, MN 55116

Dear Ms. McDaniel,

I am a retired Family Physician in St. Paul and practiced full spectrum Family Medicine in the Twin Cities for 4 decades. Over the years I cared for thousands of children, youth, adults and seniors, many of whom experienced the adverse consequences of gun violence.

I urge the MN Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Committee to support and pass SF 1116 Background Checks and SF 1117 Extreme Risk Protection Order as components of "common sense" gun laws. It is simply reprehensible that the number 1 cause of death in children across this nation is due to gun violence.

I am deeply concerned about not only children and adults at risk of injury, or death from gun violence, but also those who become secondary victims, after witnessing these traumatic firearm related events. The mental health sequelae for them are severe.

Please add my name to the list of others who endorse legislation that is consistent with these 4 house files. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Nancy J. Baker MD
Retired Family Physician

Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, Retired
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
University of Minnesota

Past President
Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing to you as a parent, teacher and community member of St. Paul in strong support of SFs 1116 and 1117.

Requiring background checks on all gun sales and transfers will positively impact our community as it will help ensure that guns are sold to responsible owners. As a teacher, I know that even to volunteer in a classroom or to coach a rec sports team, a background check is required. I believe that if someone is buying a weapon designed to kill, whether for hunting or otherwise, it is prudent to also require a background check as owning a gun is a responsibility that should be taken very seriously. Thus, I am writing in strong support of strengthening our background checks on all gun sales and transfers.

I am also in support of the extreme risk protection order to allow concerned family members to intervene and temporarily remove a gun from someone who is showing signs of intent to harm oneself or others. This is an important step in trying to curb gun violence as family members may be aware of warning signs before a tragedy occurs. As 73% of gun deaths in Minnesota are from fire arm suicide, this bill could save many gun owners' lives. The bill would protect the gun owner and community at large by giving families a way to proactively prevent tragedies. Without this bill, families that may see warning signs are powerless to protect their loved one and community, even when the desire and knowledge is there. Families need a legal avenue to temporarily remove firearms from loved ones when they become aware of intent to harm.

Thank you for your support of SFs 1116 and 1117. These important measures will keep our families, children and loved ones safe.

Maddie Muse

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

On March 24, 2018, I stood on the steps of the Minnesota Capitol and spoke to 20,000 people who had gathered for the March for Our Lives. Students from across the state had come together to voice our anger following the horrific shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Our message was clear, we needed legislators to pass laws that would protect us from gun violence. At the time many of us couldn't yet vote, but we can, and do, now.

We need common sense gun laws in Minnesota. Both of these bills offer simple solutions that will help to reduce gun violence. When similar laws have been passed elsewhere, gun deaths decreased.

There is no reason that we should waiver about passing laws requiring background checks prior to purchasing any firearms. Likewise, when a person is deemed to be a potential risk to themselves or others we need a mechanism to prevent their access to guns.

In the time since the March for Our Lives school shootings have continued to increase. According to Education Week "In 2022, there were 51 school shootings—more than double the numbers for 2018 and 2019, which both saw 24 such incidents. Last year, school shootings hit a record, with 100 people shot on school campuses and 40 people killed."

We are long past the time to act. Please support SFs 1116 and 1117.

Adrian Ali- Caccamo

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 8:30am
1200 Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to hear bills SF 1116 and 1117. This small gesture has the potential to make a big difference in the safety of Minnesotans state-wide.

My name is Maggie Dickman and I am a St. Paul resident, mother of two children in the St. Paul Public School system; and along with my husband, a fellow Wisconsin Badger. I envision a community where schools and recreation centers can be safe havens for students and community members to learn and grow and thrive. As of late, these safe havens have been the scenes of violence, where firearms have taken a very costly toll.

I support background checks on all gun sales and transfers, as well as extreme risk protection order ("red flag law"), in an effort to ensure that there is oversight surrounding access to firearms. It is my hope that, with the passage of bills SF 1116 and 1117, that there will be a reduction in the number of injuries and deaths where firearms are concerned.

As an advocate for civil justice and education yourself, Chair Latz, I expect that these goals would align your own.

Thank you for your time and attention on the matters of background checks and extreme risk protection order.

Maggie Dickman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maggie Dickman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Senator Ron Latz

SFs 1116 and 1117

Thursday March 23, 2023 at 8:30 AM
1200Minnesota Senate Building

IN SUPPORT

Dear Senator Latz and members of the Senate and Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

As a resident of Saint Paul for over 42 years, a father and grandfather of four, I am writing in support of background checks on all gun sales or transfers and extreme risk protection order (AKA red flag law). I have seen too many tragic examples of unregistered guns being used in suicides, accidental shootings and street crime. I worry about the future mostly for the safety and mental health of my grandchildren who love living in the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Howard Dickman, PhD, LP