

To: Members of the Minnesota Senate Public Safety Committee
From: Agustin Cabrera, Giffords State Legislative Manager
Subject: Support for SF4312
Date: March 20, 2024

Distinguished members of the House Public Safety Committee,

My name is Agustin Cabrera, and I am a State Legislative Manager with Giffords, the gun violence prevention organization founded by former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. **I write in support of SF4312, sponsored by Senator Gustafson, which proposes standards for safe firearm storage in Minnesota.**

Unsecured firearms in homes pose a significant danger to children and teenagers. Even modest increases in safe firearm storage could prevent a significant portion of youth gun deaths due to suicide and accidents. Household firearms, easily accessible to youth, contribute to school shootings, youth suicides, and unintentional shooting deaths. In the United States, 4.6 million minors reside in homes with loaded and/or unsecured firearms. Between 2011 and 2020 youth suicide involving firearms surged by over 61%. And studies have found that the risk of youth suicide is significantly higher in homes with unlocked and loaded firearms. Moreover, investigations into mass shootings in schools found that a majority of shooters obtained their weapons from inadequately secured home environments.

SF4312 is a crucial measure to mitigate both youth and adult firearm suicides. Studies consistently demonstrate a direct correlation between safe firearm storage practices and reduced instances of self-inflicted firearm injuries and suicides among both youth and adults. States with safe storage requirements have witnessed declines in firearm-related suicides.

Secure firearm storage curbs gun theft and illegal trafficking. Studies suggest that promoting safer storage practices could decrease gun thefts and hinder firearms from entering illegal markets. National surveys estimate that around 380,000 guns are stolen annually from individual owners, contributing to underground markets and arming criminals and minors. The consequences of stolen firearms can be severe. Just one gun stolen from a dealer in Wisconsin was subsequently linked to 27 separate shootings in Chicago—two of which were fatal—in the 20 months before it was confiscated.

In conclusion, SF4312 proposes a reasonable requirement for responsible firearm owners to securely store their weapons. Most gun owners already adhere to safe storage practices. SF4312 targets those who neglect responsible storage, posing risks beyond their households. Giffords urges your support for SF4312 as a vital strategy in combating gun violence.

Respectfully Submitted,

Agustin Cabrera
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