

Gretchen Damon, Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Good Morning Chair Latz, Committee members, and staff. Thank you for acknowledging my testimony today.

I am testifying today in support of SF4312, strengthening requirements for secure storage of firearms and ammunition.

As we know, no single law will end gun violence. However, secure storage of firearms is a unique policy which could have the largest impact on gun violence prevention.

Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in America. Last year, there were 147 unintentional shootings among children, according to Everytown for Gun Safety. When children mistakenly shoot their sibling, cousin, or friend, the lasting impact of such tragedies is unfathomable. This law will save Minnesota children's lives.

Most deaths by gun in America are suicides. They count for two-thirds of all firearm fatalities. In Minnesota, this statistic is even more frightening. Over 70% of gun deaths in our state are suicides, with the most victims being white males who live in rural areas. This law will save Minnesota men's lives.

Cars and trucks are the biggest source of stolen guns. Criminals who cannot legally obtain firearms, will break into cars, confident they will find an unattended, unlocked gun. This law will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people and save Minnesota lives.

When a gun is present in a domestic violence situation, a woman is 500% more likely to be killed. Convicted perpetrators of violence against women cannot legally own or buy firearms. Too easily though, guns can be obtained through theft. Requiring gun owners to secure their weapons will keep firearms away from abusers. This law will save Minnesota women's lives.

Our law enforcement officers can never be sure how many guns may be at an active crime scene. The surge in firearm acquisition since 2019, without sufficient emphasis on secure storage, creates heightened danger for the men and women sworn to protect Minnesotans. This law will save Minnesota police officers' and sheriffs' lives.

The bill is written as a common sense, evidence-based policy, which allows gun owners to have firearms, if they are responsible with them. Please pass this bill into law. It has the potential to keep most Minnesotans safe from gun violence.

I encourage members of the committee to vote **YES** on SF 4312.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.