

Dear Senators,

I am writing this as testimony for the hearing on Safe Storage of Firearms- SF 0916. I would like to address the issue of school shootings. As we know, the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary school was perpetrated by a teen-ager who took the gun from the home of his mother where he shot and killed her and then went to the school and massacred 20 first graders and 6 educators. There are hardly words for the horror of that day- December 14th, 2012. Sadly, Congress and state legislators have not done much to keep our kids safe from school shootings.

In Minnesota the Red Lake school shooting (2005) and the shooting at Ricori High School (2003) in Cold Springs were both perpetrated by teens who stole the guns from their law enforcement officer grandfather (Red Lake) and father (Ricori). Seven were killed at the school at Red Lake but the shooter first shot his grandfather and his grandfather's girlfriend in their home. It is the deadliest school shooting in Minnesota. The Ricori teen shot and killed 2 students at the school.

Over 70% of school shooters get their guns from their home or the home of a relative.

<https://sph.umich.edu/pursuit/2021posts/most-school-shooters-gets-guns-from-home.html>

If guns are stored securely we will save lives. Gun violence is now the number 1 killer of our children. Storing firearms securely can keep young children, teens and vulnerable adults from getting their hands on a gun and using it for suicide or unintentional shooting. Safe storage will prevent guns from being stolen and used in a crime. Many crime guns are stolen or obtained through a straw purchase. As we know now, the parents of the teen who shot and killed 4 students at Oxford High School in Michigan have been found guilty of manslaughter for providing the gun to their son, even though they knew he was underage and had some behavioral and mental difficulties.

From the linked article above:

“ Four days before a 15-year-old sophomore killed four students and wounded others at a high school shooting in Michigan, his father purchased the firearm used in the attack.

That the teenager used a weapon from home during the Nov. 30 attack is not unusual. Most school shooters obtain the firearm from home. And the number of guns within reach of high school-age teenagers has increased during the pandemic – highlighting the importance of locking firearms and keeping them unloaded in the home.”

For the reasons above and many others, it's obvious that requiring guns to be stored securely will save lives almost immediately. I urge you to vote in favor of SF 0916.

Thank you,

Joan A. Peterson

Cloquet, Minnesota

Co-President of the Northland Brady Chapter working with Protect Minnesota