

Testimony of Susie Kaufman
Minnesota Chapter Leader, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
March 22nd, 9 AM

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

My name is Susie Kaufman.

I have lived in Saint Louis Park, Minnesota for the past 8 and a half years. My husband and I have two daughters who are in elementary school.

I am testifying today in support of SF4312, strengthening requirements for secure storage of firearms and ammunition. Guns are the leading cause of death among kids and teens in Minnesota, and requiring secure storage is vital to saving lives.

Every day when I send my children to school, I worry about their safety. When they attend events or activities after school or go to new people's homes, I worry too. **I worry every day because the majority of gun owners do not secure their firearms and because unauthorized access to guns presents a serious safety risk to children in Minnesota.**

Children are smart, and just as we found ways to get at things our parents thought were kept secret, we know that children today are just as clever. In fact, in the past few years, there have been several incidents of children in Minnesota who have died or been seriously injured as a result of gaining unauthorized access to guns in their homes. Specifically, an average of 43 children and teens die by guns every year in Minnesota, of which 49% of these deaths are suicides. Our children should not have easy and unfettered access to guns when they can make emotional and impulsive decisions that can have life-ending consequences. It is incumbent upon us, as the adults in their lives, to help keep them safe.

Secure storage saves lives. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that if half of households with children that contain at least one unlocked gun switched to locking all their guns, one-third of youth gun suicides and unintentional deaths could be prevented, saving an estimated 251 lives in a single year. It is critical that we act.

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.