

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

My name is Emily Bierman and I live in Edina with my husband and three young children. **I am testifying today in support of SF4312 and SF606**, strengthening requirements for secure storage of firearms and ammunition and requiring the reporting of lost and stolen firearms. Guns are the leading cause of death among kids and teens in Minnesota, and these bills provide critical legislation to preventing child deaths while not infringing on the rights of Minnesotans.

I moved back to my home state of Minnesota two years ago after spending several years living in New York and Connecticut. It was while we were living in Connecticut that the state passed its own safe storage bill named after Ethan Song, a young teen who tragically died from a gunshot wound sustained from an unsecured gun and ammunition belonging to his friend's father. As a new parent at the time, the passing of this law was reassuring as I considered their future playdates and sleepovers. When my husband and I considered moving back to my home state in 2020, a major con on our list was Minnesota's poor gun violence prevention legislation compared to Connecticut.

As the parent of young children, I know that they are innately curious and developmentally prone to be risk-takers. With that in mind, a shocking estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm. As adults, we should be responsible for preventing unsupervised access to deadly weapons. In Minnesota this year we have seen too many tragic events unfold when very young children gained access to unsecured firearms. Every year in Minnesota, an average of 43 children and teens die from guns.^[1] It is simple; safe storage laws work and save lives, and they do not infringe on the rights of individuals to own a firearm. Studies have repeatedly shown that safe storage results in a reduction in the rates of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers by up to 85%.^[2] Lax storage of firearms contributes to many forms of gun violence. More than 80% of child firearm suicides use a gun belonging to a family member.^[3] In 75% of cases, guns used in school shootings came from the shooter's home or that of a relative.^[4]

SF606 is a common sense law that would better enable law enforcement to solve crimes as well as provide a critical step in preventing straw purchases of firearms and holding offenders responsible.

I encourage you to vote yes on both SF606 and SF4312. Thank you.

^[1] Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, "Key Statistics." <https://www.bradyunited.org/key-statistics>

^[2] Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. JAMA. 2005; 293(6): 707-714

^[3] Everytown Research. "Firearm Suicide in the United States," Dec 28, 2021. https://everytownresearch.org/report/firearm-suicide-in-the-united-states/#foot_note_40

^[4] Most Guns Used in School Shootings Come From Home, Wall Street Journal, Apr 5, 2018