

Testimony of Gretchen Damon, March 22, 9AM

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.

My name is Gretchen Damon and I live in St. Paul.

I am testifying in support of SF606, requiring lost and stolen firearms to be reported promptly to law enforcement.

Approximately, 380,000 firearms are stolen every year in the United States. Many of these guns end up in the hands of dangerous people, who are not legally allowed to own or buy firearms. Stolen guns allow criminals to get around the law, which leads to threats, injuries, and homicides. With mandatory reporting of lost or stolen firearms, law enforcement can respond quickly and prevent guns from disappearing to the point they are untraceable.

The background checks we have in Minnesota, strengthened in the 2023 legislative session, prevent dangerous people from obtaining guns in a legal manner. Background checks can only go so far. If nothing is done to motivate gun owners to report lost or stolen guns, law enforcement cannot pursue these dangerous weapons, and criminals will obtain weapons through theft. The fact that this bill does not penalize gun owners who report their lost or stolen firearms, underlines the true intent of this bill, which is to prevent gun violence and save lives.

As a volunteer for Moms Demand Action since 2016, I am weary of the heartbreaking stories I hear from gun violence survivors and the news. More and more of these stories involve guns that were obtained illegally by the perpetrators. It is time to let the source of stolen guns run dry by encouraging the reporting of lost or stolen firearms.

I encourage you to vote yes on SF606

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