March 13, 2026

Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee:

I'm a mom of a student that attends Annunciation Catholic School. August 27th has forever changed our family and our community.

My 13-year-old son was shot with a semi-automatic rifle through the stained-glass windows of our church while attending mass with his schoolmates, teachers, and staff at Annunciation Catholic School. Like many Minnesotans, I was on my way to the State Fair and considering which new foods to try when ambulances came streaming past me. Traffic was moving slowly, and I assumed there must be a terrible accident ahead. I did not yet know that my son was in one of those ambulances. I learned of the news in terrifying waves. It was a mass shooting. It was my neighborhood. It was my son's school. When an unknown caller asked if I was my son's mother, my world stood still. The paramedic informed me he was shot in the arm. His vitals were stable. My son would survive.

Now over 6 months later, the largest bullet fragment remains where it stopped, sitting on the critical bundle of major blood vessels and nerves leading to his arm. He was millimeters from losing his arm, if not his life. As an ICU physician I am no stranger to disaster, and I know the thin line between life and death. I know that rarely is there one single thing that saves a life, but a careful and deliberate combination of steps absolutely can. We cannot forego a single essential intervention simply because it is insufficient to save a life on its own. Each piece matters. As a physician and as a mom, I'm sharply aware of the fact that gun violence is currently the single most likely way for my child or yours to die. This is a life-threatening emergency.

You have a chance this session to make sure no other children have to go through what mine has. I know you, like me, care deeply about protecting Minnesota kids, and these bills are an opportunity for you to make Minnesota a safer place for all our children.

I ask you to join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light and voting yes on SF3655, SF1580, SF3549, SF3901, SF 3837, and SF 3648.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erin Wetherbee