

Testimony of Rachael Gier for SF 3655

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Chair Latz, Ranking Minority Member Limmer, and Committee Members,

My name is Rachael Gier and I am writing today to urge the committee to support SF 3655, which proposes restricting or banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines in order to reduce the likelihood and severity of mass shootings and related casualties.

I am a resident of Hennepin County, I am a parent to 3 elementary school children, and I have personally experienced the effects of gun violence in a way that forever changed my family.

I am testifying today because:

While visiting my children's grandparents on New Year's Day, a man under the influence of drugs and alcohol attempted to break into the home while carrying a loaded gun. It was the middle of the day. He was visibly intoxicated, not wearing shoes, and aggressively trying to enter the house.

Inside the home were my children and several family members. We were forced to shelter in the basement while trying to deter him from entering.

Thankfully, no one was physically harmed. But the emotional and psychological impact has been lasting. My oldest son was visibly crying and shaking in fear for his life. I think about that day often and how differently it could have ended.

My children continue to struggle with the trauma from that experience. They are fearful of going to their grandparents' home. They worry about someone trying to break into their own house with a gun and have had nightmares of such. Trauma like this changes a child's sense of safety and can affect them for the rest of their lives.

Although my family did not experience a mass shooting, the fear and trauma caused by gun violence is very real. Taking steps to restrict assault weapons and high-capacity magazines is one way we can reduce the risk of devastating harm in our communities.

I share this not only as a parent, but as someone who has seen how quickly a moment of violence can change a child's sense of safety forever. In Minnesota, guns are now the second leading cause of death for children and teens. While my family still carries the trauma from that day, I know it is not comparable to the unimaginable loss experienced by families whose children never

come home after mass shootings—and that is exactly why we must act to prevent more of those tragedies.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on SF 3655.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.