

Testimony in support of reporting lost and stolen firearms - HB 6901, SB 903, and SB 904.

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Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of reporting lost and stolen firearms.

I want to tell a simple story that illustrates why this bill is so important.

In the 1990s when I was a Board of Education member in Middletown, I participated in an expulsion hearing for an 8th grade boy who brought a loaded gun to school. The boy had visited an uncle, a police officer I'm sorry to say, in another town over the weekend. Left alone for a few minutes, he removed a gun from an unlocked cabinet in his uncle's house (where there were several), hid it and took it home. The following Wednesday he brought the gun to school in his backpack. He spent the morning showing it furtively to friends. By noon word had got around that there was a gun in school, and to escape blame he slipped it into the backpack of a girl. Both were caught. Both were expelled.

The real culprit in this case seemed to me to be, not the 8th grader trying to be a bigshot, but his uncle. He left loaded guns accessible in his home and – most relevant to the legislation – either failed to notice that his gun had been swiped or failed for four days to take any action to get the gun back. As a result, the lives of children in a junior high school were in serious danger. Perhaps even worse, the sense of the school as a safe place was undermined.

This legislation, among other benefits, will encourage gun owners to keep better track of their weapons by making them responsible for reporting any disappearances. I believe that it could have prevented the damage done to the two young people in this case, and to the school and the community.

Please support this important legislation. Thank you.