Testimony of Dr. Kevin Borup, Associate Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center to the Judiciary Committee Regarding HB 7218, An Act Concerning Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home, March 11, 2019

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts about HB 7218, An Act Concerning Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home.

My name is Kevin Borup, DrPH, JD, MPA, Associate Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. I am submitting this testimony in support of this proposed legislation because it will enhance the safety of children and teenagers who live in, or visit, a home where firearms are present.

Before commenting on the bill, I want to provide some background about Connecticut Children’s. We are a nationally recognized, 187-bed not-for-profit children’s hospital driving innovation in pediatrics. Last year alone, Connecticut Children’s directly cared for more than 15% of all kids in Connecticut covered by Medicaid and spent over $90 million in free and uncompensated care. In addition to our medical care, community facing programs like the Injury Prevention Center, who I am here representing today, have been at the forefront of promoting population health issues for over twenty years, making Connecticut one of the safest places for children in the country.

I ask you to close the loophole in Connecticut’s firearm storage laws. As currently configured, the law only applies to loaded firearms. The safe storage provisions should apply to both loaded and unloaded firearms as proposed in the bill you are hearing testimony on today. The bill will also expand the age range for which the safe storage provisions apply, raising it from applying only to those children under 16 to all children under the age of 18. Safe storage of firearms is every firearm owner’s responsibility and is one of the Ten commandments of firearm safety. As you will hear from others today, 8 children each day in the US are shot by unsecured firearms. Children have an 85% lower risk of being shot if they live in a home where firearms and ammunition are stored safely. Passing this measure will make it clear to all firearm owners what safe storage practices are to be followed in Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children’s Senior Director of External Relations, at 860-837-5557.