March 1, 2018

RE: Oppose H.B. No. 7218 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME.

TO: The members of the Judiciary Committee, (judtestimony@eca.ct.gov)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony regarding this bill.

I oppose this bill. The event that it seeks to manage (The death of Ethan Song, a 15-year-old Guilford teenager who accidentally shot and killed himself at a friend’s house last January) would not have been impacted in any way by this legislation. Providing a measure to punish the parents after the fact is merely punitive, not preventative. Changing the age of a minor in the bill from 16 to 18 is irrelevant to the case at hand, as the individuals involved were under 16. The firearm in the case cited was securely locked, again this bill provides no impact to the case. It could not be determined if the firearm was loaded or not, but again that is irrelevant as the cartridges for the firearm were in the same locked safe, and the bill allows for the storage of loaded firearms in safes. Many people keep loaded firearms in safes with quick access locking systems in an effort to secure their homes safely. There will always be the possibility that as “minor” living in the home may gain the knowledge to access the safe. This event is not a reason to pass legislation that might inhibit people from doing so.

The bottom line is that the “minors” were old enough to know that what they were doing was wrong, and the parents apparently did not know that the minor had access to the safe. This event falls on the parents and the minors, and no amount of legislation is going to stop this type of circumstance from happening again. The event could not have been stopped, and the recourse the Ethan’s parents are the civil courts.

While admittedly this is a tragedy, it is not one that can be corrected by legislative action.

Respectfully,

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