March 7, 2019

Chairmen Winfield and Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Rebimbas, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of S.B. 60, H.B. 5227, H.B. 5870, H.B. 7218, H.B. 7223.

As someone whose life has been touched by two gun deaths, I support these bills. They offer common-sense ways to create more safety around gun ownership and use.

- S.B. 60 is a long overdue, necessary and common sense provision, that can reduce tensions and aid community policing.

- H.B. 7218 and 7223 put the onus on firearms owners to properly secure their weapons to prevent access by minors, mentally unstable, or in the case of in vehicles - thieves. Some of the reasons, I support these measures include:
  1. Firearms training is not associated with proper firearm storage - indicating the status quo is not working to ensure safe storage (1) 
  2. Over 1300 kids (0-9) are killed by firearms each year and another 13,723 are injured by them (2).
  3. Suicide completion is aided by gun access and accounts for just over half of all suicide completions (3). Other important facts related to gun storage / access and suicide:
    a. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for those 15-34 both nationally and in CT (4, 5).
    b. Given human impulsivity and the timing of children’s frontal lobe development, this is particularly true for children, causing a strong relationship between guns access and suicide rates for youth.
      i. Of youths who committed suicide with firearms, 82% obtained the firearm from their home, usually a parent’s firearm (5). 
      ii. When storage status was noted, about two-thirds of the firearms had been stored unlocked (5). 
      iii. And even well-intentioned parents fail to account for this impulsivity nor realize their child may be one of the 22% who have touched / played with a gun when their gun-owning parents think they haven’t. (6).
    c. Since 90% of those who attempt (but don’t complete) suicide do not go on to die by suicide, it is important to look at the deadliness of suicide by gun. Among suicide victims requiring hospital treatment, suicide attempts with a firearm are much more deadly than attempts by jumping or drug poisoning — 90 percent die compared to 34 percent and 2 percent respectively. (2)
  4. With the rise in car thefts in the state recently, HB 7223 is a particularly relevant way to help keep guns from falling in the wrong hands.
• S.B. 5227, I support so that we don’t have each municipality setting up conflicting regulations, which would be impossible to navigate and enforce.

• S.B 5817 and 5279 - help limit access to weapons that don’t serve a positive purpose for the average citizen. And more importantly provide a means to prosecute those who choose to do so.

Thank you for working to enhance public safety and reading my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Regards,

Kim Hall
Wilton CT

Selected Sources:


6. The National Violent Injury Statistics System, p. 2