H.B. 7218: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME

Dear Co-Chairs Winfield and Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Rebimbas, Vice-Chair Bergstein and Blumenthal and all distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am Dr. Walter Kupson from Middlebury. I have been a pistol permit holder since 2007. I am also a member of the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League and an NRA certified pistol instructor.

I am also a father, husband, physician and lawful gun owner, and as such, obsessed with storing my firearms securely, with many layers of protection.

I wish to testify in OPPOSITION to H.B. 7218. You might ask how I could possibly be opposed to this proposed piece of legislation?

Mandating safe storage is quite appropriate. I posit that it would more impactful to couple this with a mandated firearm safety curriculum in our public schools. Sec 10-18b. of the General Statutes states that the State Board of Education and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association “may” develop curriculum guides to aid local and regional boards of education in developing firearm safety programs. This bill is 30 years old but to my knowledge, it has never been implemented. The NRA has a safety curriculum for children; so does the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Gun safety could be made a component of the health curriculum, alongside instruction on safe sex, pregnancy prevention, vaping, bullying and substance abuse. This measure would focus on education and prevention.

I would fully support this bill if it was accompanied by a mandated gun safety curriculum in schools. My support of this bill would also be bolstered if it included a tax break for gun safes that would further incentivized gun owners to purchase safes.

One final thought. While safes or locked containers seem to be a good idea, and are almost full-proof against young children, one must consider their limitations. One can go onto YouTube and find easy hacks for opening some of them and those hacks don’t require specialized tools. Any child, especially adolescents, but increasingly a child of any age can reference these. No doubt safes or locked containers would lower the risk, but please understand that the risk is not zero. Safes, coupled with education, would earn my support.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Walter Kupson
Middlebury, Connecticut