February 11, 2019

Members of the Judiciary Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106-1562

Dear Committee Members:

I write in strong support of Proposed House Bill No. 7218 ("An Act Concerning Safe Firearm Storage"). As a pediatric surgeon I bear witness to the devastating effect of firearms on children. I have personally cared for children who were killed or critically injured by unsecured weapons in their homes, friends’ homes, and even the family car. An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association documents that on average, 20 children and adolescents sustain firearm injuries daily in the United States. This seems to be an inevitability when one considers that guns are present in one-third of households with children and current estimates suggest that guns are unlocked 32 - 43% of the time and are loaded 14 - 30% of the time.

It seems a small step to increase the age requiring safe storage of firearms to 18 years old. Further, creating accountability for weapons storage is also a common-sense measure which may prevent access by at-risk adolescents. Finally, creating a standard safety education program for public schools can only further raise the issue, enhance safety and promote public discussion of this American epidemic.

I would reiterate my strong support for Proposed House Bill No. 7218. I would be happy to provide personal testimony to the issue.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Pritzker Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, Chief
Section of Pediatric Surgery
Surgeon-in-Chief
Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital