Chairman Stafstrom, Chairman Winfield, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel:

I am here today alongside my constituents Mike and Kristin Song of Guilford to testify in strong support of HB 7218, An Act Concerning The Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home, which is known as "Ethan's Law."

On January 31, 2018, Mike and Kristin suffered the unimaginable horror of losing their 15-year-old son Ethan to gun violence. The tragic accident that took Ethan's life was made possible by what most reasonable people would conclude to have been the improper storage of a firearm in the home of Ethan's friend.

A subsequent investigation by the State's Attorney's Office concluded that the owner of the gun had been storing the gun in a cardboard box. The gun was stored unloaded but the bullets for the gun were stored next to the gun in the same cardboard box. Because the gun was technically not loaded, the owner of the gun could not be prosecuted for improper storage because our current safe storage statute - Section 29-37i - says that only loaded firearms must be properly stored.

Last year, Mike and Kristin asked me to work with them to close this loophole by introducing legislation requiring the safe storage of all firearms, regardless of whether they are loaded, in homes with minors or those ineligible for firearm possession. In January, on the eve of what would have been Ethan's 16th birthday, I introduced the bill that became HB 7218 in his honor and in honor of all those we have lost in Connecticut due to gun violence.

HB 7218 does two simple things: it removes the word "loaded" from current statute so that our safe storage law applies to all firearms and it raises the age of who is considered to be a minor from 16 to 18 in line with our other criminal justice statutes.

In the year since they lost their son, Mike and Kristin have courageously traveled the state in support of "Ethan's Law" and reducing gun violence. Typically bills we debate in this building concerning guns are controversial; this bill does not have to be. It is a common sense solution with bipartisan support that will close a loophole in current law and ensure that firearms in homes with minors will be properly stored.

Thank you Chairmen Stafstrom and Winfield for your unwavering support and leadership and I respectfully urge my colleagues on the committee to pass "Ethan's Law."

Sincerely,

Sean Scanlon