

Testimony for the Joint Committee on the Judiciary Public Hearing

March 11, 2019

Good afternoon to the Chairs and the distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to let me speak with you today on the important issue of firearm safety. My name is Dr. Amanda Dettmer Erard.

I am from Hamden, CT, and I am an Associate Research Scientist at the Yale Child Study Center. I am here today on behalf of over 100 individual physicians, clinicians, and scientists at Yale who are experts in child behavioral, mental, and physical health. As such experts, we have an obligation to ensure the health and safety of Connecticut's children. As adults, all of us in this room and across the state have an obligation to ensure that all children in Connecticut reach their full potential. By keeping children as safe as possible, we will succeed.

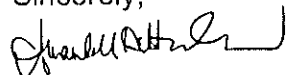
We, the 100-plus signatories of this letter, including the Chairs of Yale's Child Study Center and the Department of Pediatrics, urge this committee to vote favorably for HB-7218 and HB-7223, concerning the safe storage of firearms, and HB-7219, concerning ghost guns and 3-D printed guns.

As experts in child health, we know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We know that this suite of bills will **prevent** children's access to guns, which will help to **cure** gun violence in all its forms across the state. By prioritizing the safe storage of firearms in homes and in vehicles, these bills will ensure that Connecticut's children will be safer from accidental shootings and suicide attempts, as will banning guns without serial numbers and regulating so-called "DIY" guns that are homemade or 3-D printed. Moreover, these bills will send a message to gun owners that adults frequently try to teach children: that with rights, come responsibilities. They must lock up their firearms or be held accountable.

Not only will these bills keep Connecticut's children safe, but they will establish Connecticut as the nation's leader in prioritizing children's safety. The evidence shows that in households where both firearms and ammunition are securely locked, children have an 85% lower risk of being unintentionally shot or killed. Can anyone imagine not passing legislation that would reduce children's risk of injury or death by 85% – while still preserving gun owners' right to bear arms? Again – with rights come responsibilities. These bills will enable all of us in Connecticut to realize our responsibility to Keep. Children. Safe.

Introducing and passing HB-7218, HB-7219, and HB-7223 is in the public health interest. We applaud your efforts in introducing these bills and will gladly lend our support as they move along the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Amanda M. Dettmer Erard, PhD
Hamden, CT