

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary:

My name is Dr. Immacula Cann and I am from Stratford. I am with CT Against Gun Violence. My doctorate is in nursing and my specialty is behavioral health.

I am testifying in support of H.B. 7218, An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home, H.B. 7223 An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in Vehicles, H.B. 7219, An Act Concerning Ghost Guns and S.B. 60 An Act Concerning the Presentation of a Carry Permit.

Gun violence is an epidemic. A staggering number of people are dying via suicide with the use of a firearm. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2017 the U.S had 44,965 suicides and 22,938 (almost 1/2) of those deaths by suicide were committed with use of a firearm. Firearms are highly lethal method of attempting suicide, with a mortality rate of 92%. Only 8% who attempt suicide with a gun survive that attempt. This "rate of successful suicide" is 30% greater than attempted drowning (67%), 20% greater than attempted hanging (78%). Note that only 2% of suicide attempts through intentional overdose are successful. Because 70% of those who consider suicide, take less than 1 hour between deciding to kill themselves and the actual attempt - they are most likely to use the method that is on hand. Therefore, restricting access to lethal means could allow the mental health crisis to pass, or result in an attempt with a less lethal method. According to the CDC, firearms in the home are associated with a five-fold increased risk of suicide attempts that result in death.

I especially support H.B. 7218, An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home because a locked gun closet, keeping guns unloaded and locking ammunition or storing it separately from the weapon itself, reduces the risk of a successful suicide attempt by 55% - 73%, based on various epidemiological studies.

In closing, effective focused and please excuse the adverb, targeted gun control legislation will positively reduce the frequency of attempted suicide by firearm and consequently will reduce the overall rate of suicides.

I strongly support H.B. 7218, H.B. 7219 and S.B. 60 and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Judiciary Committee.

Sincerely,

Dr. Immacula Cann
Stratford, CT