

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary: My name is Susan Kassirer. I am from Sandy Hook, CT. I am a member of the Newtown Action Alliance, which was formed in reaction to the devastating and horrific mass shooting here in Sandy Hook in December 2012 about three miles from my home. I also support the other gun violence prevention organizations in Connecticut and nationwide, such as CAGV and Moms Demand Action.

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*.

I became a gun violence prevention advocate after the mass shooting here in Sandy Hook, CT, which left 20 six and seven year olds and six educators dead. Our community will never fully recover from this incident, nor will the now innumerable number of other communities throughout the United States who have withstood similar tragedies since then. It is unacceptable to me that I live in one of the wealthiest and most powerful countries in the world, but that our percentage of gun deaths per 100,000 people is the second highest in the world (only after Brazil). Other “civilized,” industrialized countries in the world have a small fraction of the numbers of deaths per year to gun violence compared to the United States. Again, this is unacceptable. Every measure that can be taken to reduce the number of deaths from gun violence in this country is a measure worth fighting for.

Therefore, I wish to submit testimony for HB-7218, HB-7223, HB-7219, and SB 60 today.

HB-7218, *An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home*, HB-7223 *An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in Vehicles*: There is no question that we need stronger safe gun storage laws in Connecticut in both the home and in motor vehicles. In the case of more than 80% of teenage suicides, the gun belonged to a family member. If these guns had been safely stored, away from access to children, these young people would still be alive today. Their deaths are the direct result of the irresponsibility not only of the adults directly involved in their lives but also of the irresponsible laws in the State of Connecticut. We are all responsible.

A stronger safe storage law will also help reduce gun deaths and injury from unintentional shootings, stolen guns used in crimes, and school shootings.

HB-7219, An Act Concerning Ghost Guns

It is morally wrong and downright foolish to let prohibited individuals evade background checks by allowing them to simply make guns at home. Furthermore, these untraceable DIY guns flow into the black market and end up in the hands of criminals (or more criminals). Allowing people to assemble untraceable guns at home so obviously and egregiously undercuts existing Connecticut gun laws by making it possible to get guns without passing a background check or getting a gun permit. These guns have no serial number, so they cannot be traced back to their owners once they are used in a crime. Clearly, the threat to public safety is real. Ghost guns have been used in mass shootings and in attacks on law enforcement; they have been seized in criminal investigations, including here in CT.

Most importantly, CT must act because there is no plan to regulate ghost guns or 3D printed guns at the federal level and most likely will not be any time soon. Considering what happened here in Sandy Hook in 2012, it is the moral duty of Connecticut to lead the way.

SB-60 An Act Concerning the Presentation of a Carry Permit.

Allowing police officers to see the permit of someone carrying a gun in public is a simple measure to protect public safety. We need to have a driver's license and car registration certificate on us when we drive, and we are required to show them to a police officer if he or she asks to see them. The same should obviously apply to a gun permit.

I think it is clear that I strongly support H.B. 7218, H.B. 7219 and S.B. 60, as to so many of my friends, neighbors, and associates. I urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Judiciary Committee.

Sincerely,

Susan Kassirer

Sandy Hook, CT