

**Written Testimony in Support of H.B. 7218, H.B. 7223, H.B. 7219 and S.B. 60**

**Submitted for Tuesday, March 11, 2019 Public Hearing**

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

My name is Terri Eberle Katz, I live in Ridgefield and I am a member of Moms Demand Action and the Ridgefield Chapter of Connecticut Against Gun Violence.

I am testifying in support of proposed House Bill No. 7218, An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home, House Bill No. 7223, An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in Vehicles, House Bill No. 7219, An Act Concerning Ghost Guns, and Senate Bill No. 60, An Act Concerning the Presentation of a Carry Permit.

I am the mother of a second grader and also an advocate and grant writer for nonprofit organizations. A few years ago, I worked on securing and managing Connecticut state grant funding for a nonprofit which had licensed social workers helping the Sandy Hook families heal from their horrific loss. I learned about the devastating impact of a mass shooting and national tragedy on these families – losing a child or sibling in this way is a unique loss that is so public and so difficult to handle. Additionally, I have friends in Parkland, FL whose children survived the shooting at their high school and are still recovering from that trauma.

I believe strongly that my child, his classmates, and all of our nation's children should not have to live in fear of mass shootings. They should also not have to experience being the victim of a shooting intended for someone else, or the victim of an accidental shooting. Common sense gun regulations are an important component of stopping these events - along with awareness of threats to schools and increased mental health funding.

We are fortunate that Connecticut has very strong gun regulations, however we must constantly remain aware of and seek to restrict weapons and situations that are dangerous and are not covered by existing legislation. These bills you are considering are examples of this.

Every day, eight children are unintentionally shot or killed by a gun. The safe storage bills are necessary to protect curious, inexperienced young people like the late Ethan Song from getting access to firearms and accidentally causing harm to themselves or others. These bills will also help prevent teen suicide by gun, the deadliest form of suicide attempt with little opportunity for survival. Additionally, thousands of firearms have been stolen from Connecticut homes and cars in recent years, and safe storage laws protect licensed gun owners from having their weapons stolen and misused.

Ghost guns, do-it-yourself homemade guns, currently exist outside the realm of regulated weapons. They are available online to people who would not pass a background check and should not legally own a weapon, such as those convicted of domestic violence. The current federal definition of “firearm” does not include ghost guns, and we need to act in Connecticut to fix this loophole and make ghost guns “firearms” that need background checks – we must lead the way and keep our residents safe.

Finally, the bill concerning the presentation of an open carry permit is an important component of public safety. If someone is required to have a permit to carry a gun in public, law enforcement officers should have the ability to ask the person to show their permit. If a person is a legal gun owner, they should have no problem demonstrating that to an officer who may not be sure if someone is mentally fit or otherwise qualified to be displaying a weapon in public.

Your support of these bills is necessary to prevent additional loss of life and shattered families and communities. Thank you for your time and your consideration of my testimony.