

My name is Coleman McJessy, I am from Chicago, Illinois, but I am currently a first-year student at Trinity College here in Connecticut. 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 was born October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999, exactly 6 months after the Columbine shooting. I am part of what my peers from Parkland call “the school shooting generation.” My entire life I have took part in shooter drills, from the first month I stepped foot in first grade, to my last drill less than a month before I graduated high school. So high was the possibility of being shot while in school, that teachers and lawmakers saw fit to prepare us for that situation once a month.

I was 12 when 20 students were killed at Sandy Hook. My classmates and I were on a field trip. We were literally returning to school when my teacher, a tall, commanding, 50-year-old man, started to cry. He told us that twenty kids were shot in Connecticut. And then he asked us to go inside, back to our classrooms, not so different from where those were twenty kids had just been murdered.

I was 18 when 14 students were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. But this time, after another senseless slaughter due to lawmakers’ inaction, my peers, now grown, led the charge for sensible gun control. Eighteen years after Columbine, the situation was so unchanged that those who were not even born at the time had to lead. I was so proud of the brave and heroic students, most not even old enough to vote, who decided that we have lived long enough in fear. These leaders, who confronted America and elected officials in ways that ‘adults’ have seemed unable to do, with names like Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg, Jaclyn Corin, Delaney Tarr, and so many others, have endured nationwide hate and scorn, simply because they want to be able to go to school without the fear of being shot.

The deaths, while tragic, are not the only casualties of our lack of gun control. Students no longer feel safe in schools, mostly because we no longer *are* safe at school. Chairman Winfield, Chairman Stafstrom, when your generation went to school, a mere twenty years ago, you could walk in and out of school without a metal detector. You weren’t asked to make sure that every classroom door clicked when it closed, for fear that if it didn’t, it would result in your deaths. While I was in high school, my school received four school shooting threats and my sister’s school received three. We were lucky that not a single one of these threats was acted upon because none of these individuals were able to obtain a gun.

I don’t have to tell anyone that gun control is a contentious issue in this country. Some see firearms as an icon of American independence and freedom. Others see guns and shooting as a symbol of tradition and conservative values. However, both of these reasonable positions have been cannibalized by the abomination that is the National Rifle Association. This cabal masquerading as an interest group has so corrupted politicians with their money that they have convinced large swaths of the American population to support their selfish positions. However, despite the NRA’s attempted brainwashing, Americans still agree on the need for reasonable, sensible gun control.

As a student, a voter, and a citizen of the United States and Connecticut, I am asking you, my elected officials, to protect my life. Require those with open carry permits to present them to police officers, require gun owners to safely store their weapons, and require guns to have serial numbers and regulate those who print or construct their own guns.

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,

Coleman McJessy, Hartford, CT