

March 10, 2019

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

My name is Rev. Nancy R. Leckerling, I am from Madison, CT and I am a minister of the United Church of Christ. I am a parent, a grandparent and a member of Moms Demand Action and CAGV. 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. Due to an illness, I could not be at the Capitol today to give my spoken testimony in support of these bills, but I strongly am in favor of your passing these acts into law.

Sadly, our daughter-in-law's 27 year-old brilliant brother took his life with a gun nine years ago. He suffered from bipolar disorder and depression and went off his medication for awhile, and unfortunately had a gun at his disposal. I believe we need to address the connection between mental illness and the use of guns and have more programs to help people and to make it more difficult to buy a gun. Guns should not be sold without background checks, without serial numbers, and "Do It Yourself" kits, known as "ghost guns", must be regulated. I also support the right of local authorities to interview immediate family members as part of a determination of an applicant's suitability for a permit to carry a firearm in public. If the latter were practiced, our daughter-in-law's brother might still be alive.

Gun manufacturers have evaded state and federal laws by marketing DIY guns. These websites sell kits for making handguns as well as powerful AR-15s and AK-47s. These "ghost" guns have no serial numbers, are untraceable, and require no background checks to purchase. We have seen the carnage of mass shootings and attacks on police with these guns all around our country. There is NO reason why anyone should possess an unregistered, untraceable firearm.

Expanding safe storage requirements will help save lives from gun violence such as crime-related gun violence, unintentional shootings, like the tragic death of Ethan Song, a member of the church we attend, suicide, school and other mass shootings. This act sends a message to gun owners to lock their firearms when they aren't using them or be held ACCOUNTABLE.

I want our children and grandchildren to live and thrive safely in their communities. Making gun safety a priority would help all children to thrive and grow up to realize their potential. I strongly support H.B. 7218, H.B. 7223, H.B. 7219 and S.B. 60 and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for your service to our State and for the opportunity to give written testimony, as I was most disappointed not to be able to give my testimony at the Capitol today.

Sincerely,

*Rev. Nancy R. Leckerling*

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