

March 11, 2019

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

My name is Rev. Nada Sellers, and I serve as a pastor at Center Church Hartford, UCC. I work with children and youth as the Acting Director of Faith Formation, something that offers me a window into the lives of many CT citizens. I am a CT Certified high school lacrosse coach, a mother of a 12 year old, a teacher, a mentor, a gun violence advocate and a supporter of gun sense legislation. Throughout my entire ministry, I have carried a commitment to peace-making and teaching nonviolence in every setting where I have served.

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*, and H.B. 7219, *An Act Concerning Ghost Guns*. I am particularly concerned about the ease with which on-line gun sales are skirting the current requirements for registration and background checks; and the use of 3-D printers to complete a firearm is absolutely frightening to me. I come from a long line of hunters and gun owners in rural PA, and I understand what responsible gun ownership looks like. This standard cannot be maintained if the wrong people have access to firearms, people with dangerous histories such as felons, domestic abusers and people with dangerous mental illnesses.

As someone devoted to the care and nurture of children and youth, I work closely with families and community partners to try and ensure safe environments where spiritual growth can flourish. Fear of gun violence and unintentional shootings by children are realities in the experiences of many of my youthful congregants. Reducing easy access to weapons in cars is simply common sense in order to ensure minors are kept safe. We are experiencing far too many unintentional shootings by children, something ravaging all kinds of communities, and traumatizing whole networks with their impact. These legislative steps will also limit the ability of younger folks who are struggling with suicidal thoughts or other dangerous mental health challenges to possess the kind of weapon that can result in lethal consequences. Please do all you can to ensure these three bills can be moved forward and become law.

With this letter, I strongly support H.B. 7218, H.B. 7219, and H.B. 7223, and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Judiciary Committee.

Sincerely,

Rev. Nada Sellers
Hartford, CT