

**March 11, 2019**  
**Judiciary Committee**

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

My name is Mary Welander and I live in Orange, CT. In addition to serving on the Orange Board of Education, I am the Promise Leader Ambassador for Connecticut with Sandy Hook Promise. I am also the mother of three school aged children and the sister of three combat veterans.

I am testifying in strong **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 involved with Sandy Hook Promise shortly after its creation; at the time we lived in the town next door to Newtown and the massacre that occurred had deep effects on both me and my community. The safety from gun violence for our children in all areas of their lives has become a priority to me which is why I am writing in support of all of the bills proposed today.

My family has been directly impacted by the use of firearms. We understand their power and intention, and the consequences that come from their use. While we are incredibly proud of the many years my brothers served, and continued to serve, we have also spent years watching and waiting while they were deployed in high risk combat zones. I, and my husband, also come from families who hunt. My husband's family in Iowa have a long-standing tradition of gathering for an annual deer hunt. The food from that weekend feeds many families for the rest of the year. **There are many ways to use a firearm, but underneath it all is the understanding of responsibility.**

Responsible gun ownership means acknowledging their power and protecting those – especially children – who may abuse it or not understand that power in the home, in a vehicle, or anywhere.

Responsible gun ownership means claiming that firearm legally. It is a point of pride for many; why would a responsible gun owner want to hide this?

Responsible gun ownership means partnering with your community, including acknowledging the daily violence that our first responders have to address every single day. Support for our local police forces should include listening to what *they* say will help keep them safe on the job, keep our communities safer by keeping firearms out of the hands of people who should not have them, and will contribute to the faster resolutions of potentially dangerous situations.

Members of the committee, you have the unique opportunity to simultaneously prevent future tragedies like the loss of Ethan Song, the children and educators at Sandy Hook Elementary, and so many, many other children and members of our towns and our state – while also respecting and maintaining the second amendment rights of our residents. This isn't about restricting access, this is about providing a smarter, more *responsible*, route.

**For these reasons and so many more 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 time.

Sincerely,

Mary Welander  
Orange, CT