

March 2, 2026

House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Support for HF3668

Dear Co-Chair Bierman, Co-Chair Backer, and Committee Members,

I am the mother of a sixth grader who had just started at Annunciation Catholic School this school year. August 27 was her third day there — and her very first Mass in that church. By the end of that morning, our lives were divided into “before” and “after.”

We were one of the fortunate families. We got to hold our daughter that day. She was not physically injured, but she has not been the same since.

In the weeks following the shooting, she felt physically sick just trying to walk through the school’s doors. Nauseous. Shaking. Begging us not to make her go inside. She has shown a kind of bravery no child should ever have to summon, but her body remembers what her mind is still trying to process. Eventually, we made the heartbreaking decision to move her to another school so she could breathe again — so she could simply be a child.

Before that day, she had never struggled with anxiety. Now she carries it with her every day. I am not writing to debate politics.

I am writing as a parent who watched her daughter lose her sense of safety in a single morning — and who has seen that fear ripple through classmates, teachers, families, and an entire community.

No parent should ever have to run toward their child’s school in absolute terror, not knowing if they will get to hold them again.

You have the power to reduce the chances that another family will live through that moment. I am asking you to show up this session not as Democrats or Republicans, but as lawmakers entrusted with protecting children and communities.

Please vote yes on HF 3668 (Bierman) and create the Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the Minnesota Department of Health.

Thank you for taking the time to read our story and for your service to the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely,
Ieva Saulite Gorrilla
125 W 52nd St
Minneapolis, MN 55419

3/1/26

House Health Finance and Policy

Support for HF3668

Dear Co-Chair Bierman, Co-Chair Backer, and Committee Members,

My wife, Meghan, and I have three children who have attended Annunciation since pre-K. Our son, Ryan, graduated last year, and our daughters, Lily and Annie, are currently in fifth and third grade. On August 27th, they were in the church, hiding under pews as 116 bullets flew overhead—killing two classmates, injuring dozens of friends, and forever altering their sense of safety.

I will never fully understand the terror they experienced, but I see its impact every day. They attend therapy weekly. Nightmares are common. They duck below windows. They are wary of strangers. They think about death in ways children never should.

Gun violence is a real public health crisis and should be treated as such. Families like mine continue to live with the fear of gun violence, and as a father, nothing has felt more helpless than being unable to assure my children they are safe.

I hope you will join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light and voting yes on HF3668 and create the Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the Minnesota Department of Health.

Sincerely,

Dan Manchon

February 28, 2026

House Health Finance and Policy

Support for HF3668

Dear Co-Chair Bierman, Co-Chair Backer, and Committee Members,

I'm a mom of a student that attends Annunciation Catholic School. August 27th has forever changed our family and our community.

My 13-year-old son was shot with a semi-automatic rifle through the stained-glass windows of our church while attending mass with his schoolmates, teachers, and staff at Annunciation Catholic School. Like many Minnesotans, I was on my way to the State Fair and considering which new foods to try when ambulances came streaming past me. Traffic was moving slowly, and I assumed there must be a terrible accident ahead. I did not yet know that my son was in one of those ambulances. I learned of the news in terrifying waves. When an unknown caller asked if I was my son's mother, my world stood still. The paramedic informed me he was shot in the arm. His vitals were stable. My son would survive.

Now 6 months later, the largest bullet fragment remains where it stopped, immediately adjacent to the critical bundle of major blood vessels and nerves leading to his arm. He was millimeters from losing his arm, if not his life. As an ICU physician, I am no stranger to disaster, and I know the thin line between life and death. I know what I am called upon to do to save a life and I know the cost of that life-saving care both for those who receive it as well as the system that provides it. I also know that several of my son's schoolmates are alive today because of the skilled and coordinated effort of our emergency medical response system on August 27th. When we are prepared, informed, practiced, and coordinated we can save lives.

You have a chance this session to see that our state addresses gun violence prevention in the same informed and coordinated way that serves us in other crises. You have a chance to show up as a lawmaker, not a democrat or a republican, to pass a bill that ensures Minnesota takes the prevention of gun violence seriously, as a public health crisis.

I hope you will join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light and voting yes on HF3668 and create the Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the Minnesota Department of Health.

Sincerely,
Dr. Erin Wetherbee

Testimony of Kelsey Morgan for HF 3668

Volunteer with Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America / Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Kelsey Morgan and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence, and it would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I live in the community where the recent shooting at Annunciation school took place. That tragedy deeply impacted our entire community. I also have close friends who send their children to that school, and I have witnessed the lasting trauma families continue to carry.

I am testifying today because gun violence is not an abstract issue to me — it is personal. On the day of the shooting, a friend of mine was walking with her children near the school when shots rang out and someone screamed at her to run for safety. She grabbed her children and ran. The fear and trauma from that day have not disappeared. They remain present in conversations, in classrooms, and in daily life.

My experience leads me to emphasize this: gun violence is a public health crisis, and we must treat it as one. Establishing an Office of Gun Violence Prevention would allow Minnesota to take a coordinated, data-driven approach to preventing future tragedies.

States that invest in gun violence prevention infrastructure are better equipped to collect data, identify trends, coordinate across agencies, and implement evidence-based strategies to reduce shootings and save lives. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention would help ensure that our state is proactive rather than reactive.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Testimony of Jen King for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

March 1, 2026

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Jen King, and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a mother of two children (a preschooler and student in Minneapolis Public Schools), work and live in Minneapolis, and am attending the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs. I live in fear every day for myself and my children, as gun violence in schools, especially after the Annunciation School shooting, impacts our daily life.

I am testifying today because:

- In 2021, when my youngest was receiving the Covid vaccine at the Mall of America health site, there was an active shooting inside the mall that kept my children and I locked down for nearly four hours. This occurred the week after the mass shooting at Uvalde Elementary School in Texas, and the fear of being trapped with an active shooter outside the door resonated deeply.
- Gun violence costs Minnesotans \$6.6 billion each year, and taxpayers bear over \$100 million of this cost. As a taxpayer and contributing member of society, I want my tax dollars used to *prevent* gun violence rather than respond to gun violence after harm has occurred.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jen King

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Jane Martin and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a retired teacher and am horrified by the gun violence in schools as well as by the mental health toll of active shooter drills. I am testifying today because firearm-related injuries are the leading cause of death for children and adolescents (ages 1-19) in Minnesota and the United States, having surpassed motor vehicle crashes. This is NOT NORMAL and you have a responsibility to do something about it.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jane Martin

1700 Plymouth Rd. #432

Hopkins, MN 55305

My name is Danneka Halverson, I am a resident of Edina MN. I am writing to support creation of an Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the state level.

I share my viewpoint not only as a resident of Minnesota, but as a parent of kids in public school and as an educator in a public school district. On the morning of August 27th I was sitting in a back to school staff meeting about safety and security updates to our building when we heard the news of the horrific events across town. The irony of this is almost unbearable - school staff continue to do everything we can each year to protect ourselves and our students, and yet we are simultaneously, constantly reminded that it is not enough.

As a parent and an educator, this topic has hit too close to home for too long. Each year at work I have experienced lockdown drills with students as young as 3 and 4 years old. Times when we applaud students not for learning their ABCs or how to share toys, but instead applauding them for sitting quietly in the corner of a dark room. I work in special education, and I've had to have conversations with colleagues about which of us would carry a medically fragile student from the building should we feel it the best option to flee in an active situation. Or conversations about how to keep a nonverbal student with autism calm and able to follow directions in a drill. Educators spend immense bandwidth and resources to support our students during these intense drills and to keep our students safe everyday. Accordingly to Everytown for Gun Safety Research, in 2025 alone there were at least 159 incidents of gunfire on school grounds across our country. For comparison, In Minnesota we have 165 instructional days. That means that Almost everyday an educator like myself drives home from school, there is a news story that reminds us that we are not safe from violence.

As an educator, and as a parent, it is my job to do all I can to keep my children and my students safe. For too long we have borne the weight of this responsibility while lawmakers at every level say nothing can be done. Elected representatives have the job of doing everything they can do to keep the residents of Minnesota safe. Creation of an Office of Gun Violence Prevention would direct necessary resources to support keeping all Minnesotans safe. I urge you to pass the bill. Thank you.

Danneka Halverson
Edina, MN

My name is Danneka Halverson, I am a resident of Edina MN. I am writing to support creation of an Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the state level.

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Danneka Halverson
Edina, MN

My name is Erin Colasacco, and I live in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I am writing in support of HF 3668 to create a Minnesota Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

Gun violence affects communities across our state, including mine. It is not only about mass shootings. It includes domestic violence, suicide, and everyday incidents that leave families and neighborhoods grieving. I believe Minnesota should take a coordinated, prevention-focused approach to this issue.

An Office of Gun Violence Prevention would help bring together state agencies and community partners so efforts are not scattered or reactive. It could focus resources on the people and places most at risk, support proven prevention programs, and make sure the state is responding in a thoughtful and effective way.

I also support common-sense policies that reduce the likelihood of mass casualty events, including limits on assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines. These measures can help reduce the scale of harm when violence does occur.

Gun violence prevention should not be a partisan issue. It is about keeping people safe and supporting healthy communities. Creating this office is a practical step Minnesota can take right now.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state. I respectfully urge you to support HF 3668.

Sincerely,
Erin Colasacco
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Testimony of Elyse Moretti Forbes for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Elyse Moretti Forbes and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a mom and a former public school teacher.

I am testifying today because:

- In my very first year of teaching, one of my students lost an older brother to gun violence. I saw firsthand the devastation that a single act of gun violence can have on a community. Now that I am a parent, the fear of gun violence haunts my days. My kindergartener practices drills to keep her safe in her classroom.

My experience leads me to emphasize coordination and communication around preventing gun violence.

- Thirteen states have established offices of gun prevention to improve partnerships and coordination in reducing gun violence, researching gun violence, and supporting the victims of gun violence. Minnesota should follow suit.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

March 2, 2026

House Health Finance and Policy

Support for HF3668

Dear Co-Chair Bierman, Co-Chair Backer, and Committee Members,

I'm a mom of an 8th grade student of Annunciation Catholic School. My son was in the Annunciation Church on August 27th and the shooting has forever changed who our family and community is.

Our family will forever grieve the loss of Harper Moyski and Fletcher Merkel, sweet children who we will never see grow and develop like our own son. On August 27, my husband and I were able to bring our son home. But the shooting was not a one-day event.

A new part of our lives are regular discussions about the impact of trauma on our son and a fear for his ability to establish trusting relationships and feel safe where he lives, studies, plays and worships. He does not yet fully appreciate the harm to himself and his classmates, and this is a blessing in some ways. But one day he will, and we are terrified for when that happens. We are terrified because we know what it is like for us: an abiding moral injury of basic bodily safety being ripped away in the place where we thought we were safest.

This injury is heightened because of the heroic efforts of everyone involved. Adults in church yelled, "down, down, down" and saved children's lives. Neighbors called for help and immediately ran towards the church. Teachers threw their bodies over children and children threw their bodies over children. The police arrived in two minutes. Police ran immediately into danger to protect as many as they could. It took 14 minutes from the first 911 call for injured children to arrive at the hospital.

Everyone did their jobs. We could not ask for more. But two children have died, thirty people were physically injured, an entire community is traumatized, and the pain, the grief, and abiding fear and uncertainty for our family remains.

Professionally, I evaluate non-profits to determine how successful they are in meeting their mission and to identify areas for improvement. All my work starts by examining research and evidence for what is known about how to solve the problem at hand. This bill strengthens our ability to understand how to keep our children safe.

You have a chance this session to make sure our state supports victims of gun violence and works towards future prevention. You have a chance to show up as a lawmaker, not a democrat or a republican, to pass a bill that ensures Minnesota takes the prevention of gun violence seriously, as a public health crisis.

I hope you will join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light. Please vote yes on HF 3668. Gun violence against children is preventable.

Sincerely,

ANNE BETZNER

February 28, 2026

House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Written Testimony in support of HF 3668.

Members of the Committee:

The current status quo around addressing gun violence is outlandish. A modern solution is overdue.

I am the father of a student that attends Annunciation Catholic School.

August 27th has forever changed our family and our community.

There are things that happen and there are things that should never happen.

On August 27, 2025 my seventh-grade son was attending church at Annunciation School in Minneapolis when an untrained gunman, equipped with 30-round magazines, fired 116 rounds in sixty-seven seconds through stained-glass windows on a sunny Wednesday morning. Two children, Fletcher Merkel, 8, and Harper Moyski, 10, were killed and thirty more were injured.

An entire industry has developed around preparations for active shooters. School districts and policy makers have spent billions of tax dollars on hardening schools, on reunification plans, on in-service workshops for teachers to decide whether they should run, hide, or fight in a given scenario. There have been public discussions about arming teachers and building schools and classrooms without windows. Around the country, funds have been spent on the training and retraining of first responders and hospitals for mass casualty, battlefield-type events.

A photo of my wife and son's reunification embrace was most of the front page of the Minnesota Star Tribune the next morning. My son's first question moments after the photo, "Are my friends alive?"

Before August 27, 2025 I naively believed that wanton and senseless violence wouldn't affect me or my loved ones. I thought we were safe. It happened elsewhere. It happened in other neighborhoods. It happened in Connecticut and Texas and Nevada and Virginia and Florida and Colorado. My children would ask about "Code Red" drills in the evenings after yet another drill and I would quote talking points about schools and places of worship being statistically the safest places. I told my children that we live in a nice neighborhood. I told them that we were safe. I told them that they were safe.

I attended two funerals of murdered children and was overwhelmed by the thought of Sandy Hook and Robb families attending dozens more. A wreath with the following message was placed outside Annunciation shortly after shooting, "We get it. With love, Uvalde." It is a haunting message that takes on new meaning every day.

Most American adults have never had to practice a lock-down drill. Our children have, many times, and they live in a world where this is routine. This is deeply unfair to our children and selfish on our part as adults.

My son and his classmates had the courage to return to school.

Do we have the courage to do something?

My son now jumps at loud noises. Sounds, unremarkable to my ear, bring recollections of shattering stained glass. He tells us that he's okay but his eyes and the look on his face betray him. He doesn't like to be alone. He has a bedroom but chooses to sleep on the floor next to our bed. He is 13. I've stopped asking him what his nightmares are about. A friend honored him with his father's Purple Heart ribbon bar earned in Normandy at the end of World War II; it is now framed next to his bed.

My son was separated from his friends in the chaos after the shooting. When later reunited in the school gym they on sight and pure in heart ran toward each other and embraced through sobs.

We, the adults, have failed. We have failed our children and our grandchildren. And if we do nothing, we will have failed another generation of American schoolchildren.

We must bravely confront unpleasant truths about the present. We compel our children to courageously march into school every day. Schools where they will be required to practice active shooter and lock-down drills. Schools where they will learn the unofficial curriculum of what was allowed to take place at Sandy Hook Elementary and Robb Elementary and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with a geographic addendum to the nearest and most recent school shooting.

Our children are on the defensive. It is something that I've known, but didn't acknowledge in a meaningful way for nearly two decades, and I am ashamed.

Our current reality is that no community is safe from firearm violence.

When your child or grandchild asks you what you have done to make them safer at school how will you respond?

When the shooting begins in your community, it is all about seconds. The police and other first responders will arrive in less than five minutes.

What sort of firearm do you want the shooter to level at your loved one?

What is the magazine capacity?

How many times will they need to reload?

What is the design of the rounds they are firing?

Which fire rate modification device are they using?

The inexperienced Annunciation gunman used three firearms that morning: a handgun, a shotgun, and an AR-style rifle with multiple 30-round magazines. The weapon used for nearly 97% of the rounds fired was not a self-defense handgun, nor was it a hunting shotgun. It was a rifle firing high-pressure rounds that, by design, would yaw, fragment, and zigzag through their small bodies on impact. This weapon and setup was selected for one reason: maximum carnage in the shortest period of time.

The cost of doing nothing is more of the same: the blood of America's schoolchildren. There is a non-zero chance that your child or grandchild or niece or nephew could be murdered in school while trying to memorize their multiplication tables.

It hasn't always been this way.

There are things that should never happen again.

You have a chance to make meaningful change to this session and make sure Minnesota's children have safer schools and communities. To make our police officers and other first responders safer. You have an opportunity to make your families and loved ones safer. I hope you will join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light and voting yes on HF 3668.

Thank you for your time,

John "Jake" Kelly
312 Prospect Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55419
jakekellympls@gmail.com

March 1, 2026
Minneapolis, Minnesota

To: Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members, MN House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

My name is Catherine Brennan. I am writing to urge the committee to support **HF 3668**, a Bill which would establish an office of gun Violence Prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a resident of Minneapolis, and a volunteer with the Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I joined after working as a youth services librarian at the Hennepin County North Regional Library from 2008 to 2018. During my service there, I heard about, met, worked with and played with seven children and teens who died by gun violence. Two were killed in their own homes from shots fired from outside. (Family members were present in these homes.) The eldest was 17 years, the youngest was 2 years old. I was playing with him in the library 10 days before he died.

Last fall, after the shooting of students and adults at Annunciation Catholic Church, I attended a forum at a neighboring church. We heard from a seasoned emergency room nurse, who had treated many of the children and adults who were shot that day. She sobbed as she articulated for us, with technical expertise, the effects of assault weapon shootings on the bodies of people. She emphasized how these are especially damaging and more lethal to children, the bodies of children being generally smaller than those of adults.

We have heard ALOT about the shootings of children this year. But did you know that the **highest rates of gun violence deaths** in Minnesota are of European American(white) males who die by suicide? That rate is 79%.

An Office with the resources to devote to these efforts would be able to conduct research, research that would help create more focused public health campaigns. Witness the efforts of the St Paul Police Dept. When I lived and volunteered with the Moms Demand Action in St. Paul, we learned that the main motivation for car jacking was to find guns. One person might carjack up to 20 cars a day looking for them. And stolen guns often get used to commit violent crimes. When St Paul created its Safe Storage rule, the rate of carjackings decreased. I still have conversations with responsible gun owners who ask if it's OK to store a gun in the glove box. The answer is a firm **NO**.

I strongly urge you **all** to vote **YES on HF 3668**.

Sincerely,
Catherine Brennan



Minnesota House Health Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

March 2, 2026

Re: Opposition to HF 3668 – Office of Gun Violence Prevention

Chair Backer, Chair Bierman, and Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus, the trusted voice of Minnesota’s gun owners working to defend and restore the right to keep and bear arms, **we respectfully urge you to vote NO on HF 3668.**

HF 3668 proposes creating a new “Office of Gun Violence Prevention” within the Minnesota Department of Health.

While presented as a public health initiative, the bill would establish a permanent, taxpayer-funded office with broad authority to shape firearm policy, influence legislation, coordinate with outside organizations, and promote regulatory strategies under the banner of research and data collection.

Minnesota does not need another layer of government bureaucracy focused on reframing and restricting a constitutional right.

The proposal mirrors a federal experiment that was recently dismantled after becoming a centralized advocacy hub inside the Executive Branch. The former White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention was created to coordinate firearm policy and regulatory initiatives, but it ultimately functioned as a political policy engine. Minnesota should not replicate that model at the state level.

Instead of focusing on violent offenders, repeat criminals, and systemic prosecution failures, HF 3668 institutionalizes a public-health framing that treats lawful firearm ownership as a societal pathology.

The Second Amendment protects a fundamental civil right. It should not be recast as a public health disorder.

HF 3668 grants the proposed office sweeping authority to conduct and promote research on gun violence, collect and report firearm-related data, create public messaging campaigns, build partnerships with national stakeholders, and serve as a legislative resource on gun violence prevention policy. The bill contains no meaningful guardrails limiting how this authority may be



used. There is no clear statutory limitation on coordination with private advocacy organizations, nor is there a prohibition on engaging in activities that functionally support policy advocacy.

In practice, “national stakeholders” often means national gun control advocacy organizations.

Minnesota taxpayers should not be compelled to fund coordination with outside political groups whose stated mission is to restrict lawful firearm ownership. This office would not simply operate as a neutral data clearinghouse; it would operate as a policy engine embedded within state government.

Minnesota already funds and operates substantial public safety infrastructure.

The Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Office of Justice Programs, county attorneys, local law enforcement agencies, and victim support services all play direct roles in addressing violent crime. If violence is the concern, the solution lies in enforcement, prosecution, and accountability. Creating another administrative office does not put repeat offenders behind bars, strengthen prosecution, address gang activity, or reform plea-bargaining practices. It creates additional bureaucracy.

Minnesota taxpayers are also already funding a politicized firearms litigation clinic within the University of Minnesota Law School, commonly referred to as the “Gun Violence Prevention Clinic.”

In practice, that clinic has participated in litigation defending Minnesota’s gun control laws, supported legal strategies targeting firearm manufacturers and retailers, and advanced policy positions aligned with national gun control advocacy organizations. This is not merely neutral academic inquiry; it is taxpayer-subsidized advocacy. Law-abiding gun owners in Minnesota are already compelled to fund a public university program that works to uphold and expand firearm restrictions.

Supporters argue that HF 3668 is needed to improve data collection and address firearm-related violence as a public health issue.

However, Minnesota and the federal government already collect extensive data on violent crime and suicide involving firearms. At the state level, the Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Office of Justice Programs, the Department of Health, and local law enforcement agencies compile and publish firearm-related crime and mortality statistics. At the federal level, the FBI, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics collect and publish comprehensive data annually. Information about homicide, assault, domestic violence, and suicide involving firearms is already tracked, analyzed, and reported.



Creating a new Office of Gun Violence Prevention does not fill a data gap; it duplicates existing functions.

If the legislature believes reporting or coordination can be improved, it can direct current agencies to refine their data collection and collaboration efforts. It does not need to establish a permanent, standalone office with its own staff, budget, and policy mandate to accomplish that goal. Minnesota should strengthen the institutions it already funds rather than layering on redundant bureaucracy.

HF 3668 would establish a new director, full-time staff, retirement system obligations, grant-seeking authority, annual reporting requirements, and ongoing general fund appropriations. All of this would be created without demonstrated evidence that such an office reduces violent crime.

At a time when Minnesotans face rising taxes, inflation, and ongoing public safety concerns, expanding government overhead should not be the first response.

If this body is serious about reducing violence, the path forward is clear: enforce existing laws against violent felons, address repeat offender release, support law enforcement, ensure meaningful prosecution, and expand direct services for victims. The Constitution does not prevent Minnesota from punishing violent criminals. It does prevent the state from targeting peaceful citizens for exercising a fundamental right.

HF 3668 would create a permanent, taxpayer-funded policy office dedicated to reframing and regulating a constitutional right. Minnesota already funds a publicly supported clinic advancing firearm restriction strategies. Establishing an additional executive branch office to pursue similar objectives is unnecessary, duplicative, and fiscally irresponsible. This bill expands bureaucracy instead of strengthening accountability.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote NO on HF 3668.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bryan Strawser
Chair

Anna Leamy
Director, Government Relations & Advocacy

Minnesota Chapter

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March 2, 2026

Dear members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the over 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP) committed to improving the health of children and adolescents across Minnesota, we write in strong support of HF 3668 to establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

Firearm-related injury and death have reached crisis levels for children in the United States. Firearms are the leading cause of death for U.S. children and adolescents ages 1–19, surpassing motor vehicle crashes and other causes. Nearly one in three American children lives in a home with firearms, and among these households, a large proportion contain at least one unlocked or loaded gun, creating conditions that substantially increase the risk of unintentional injury and suicide.

As pediatricians, we see the far-reaching impacts of firearm injury and exposure to gun violence, from acute physical trauma to lasting psychological effects, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. These experiences not only threaten children's immediate safety but also undermine their long-term health, development, and educational success.

The MNAAP believes that preventing firearm injury requires intentional investment in systems that keep children safe before harm occurs. HF 3668 would provide the structure needed to bring together health care providers, educators, public health professionals, families, and community leaders to align strategies, share information, and target resources where they are most needed. A dedicated Office of Gun Violence Prevention would ensure that Minnesota's response to firearm injury is strategic, accountable, and informed by frontline experience, while reinforcing efforts to make communities safer for all children and youth.

Gun violence is preventable. Establishing an Office of Gun Violence Prevention is a critical step toward protecting the health, safety, and futures of Minnesota's children and families. We urge your support for HF 3668.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smentek".

Katie Smentek, MD

President, Minnesota Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

February 23, 2026

Dear Chairs Moller, Novotny and members of the Committee

My name is Katie Najjar, I am the mother to 3 children, 2 of which attend Annunciation Catholic School. The mass shooting event of August 27th has forever changed our family and our community.

On the morning of August 27th, I had just dropped my youngest child off at his first day of school. My other children were already on campus at Annunciation, and I planned to go about my normal day until I was due to pick them up later in the afternoon. Less than an hour later, I received the worst phone call of my entire life. It was my 10 year old daughter screaming "Mom, you have to come pick us up NOW!" I raced the 3 miles to school where I was hit with the news: while my children, their classmates, teachers, other parents and neighbors were in mass, 116 bullets shattered glass and pews in less than 2 minutes, killing 2 children and devastating hundreds of lives forever. Now, my family lives every day with the grief and trauma of surviving a mass murder.

My children were physically unharmed during the assault at their school. They came home that day in uniforms torn from shrapnel and emotional scars that are unseen but will never fade. The safe space where they celebrated school mass, First Holy Communion and witnessed their cousin graduate was turned into a war zone and a place where they will never, ever feel safe to enter again. They suffer from physical trauma symptoms like stomach aches, fainting, shortness of breath. And emotional trauma responses like anxiety, trouble coping in busy environments, and fear from loud noises. We have, and will continue to spend, hours in therapy, counseling, and interruptions in our every day lives.

You have a chance this session to make sure no other children have to go through what mine have. You have a chance to show up as a lawmaker, not a democrat or a republican, to pass a bill that will create safer schools and communities. This issue is not abstract, it's not policy, it is the real lived experience of my children and our family. 70% of Minnesotans don't ask our lawmakers for much, but they are asking NOW that we protect our children.

I hope you will join me and other Annunciation families by spreading light. Please vote yes on HF 3433 and HF 3402.

With hope and joy,
Katie Najjar
5012 Russell Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55410

Testimony in Support of HF 3668 by
Carla Gillespie, volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Carla Gillespie. I am a St Paul resident and a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

Everyone in the our state is affected by gun violence. Victims have family members, friends, neighbors, schoolmates, teachers, and fellow members of their places of worship. The first responders and medical professionals who treat gunshot victims experience trauma, too. Yet, we don't have a centralized hub that can coordinate all of the efforts to respond to and prevent incidents of gun violence.

Thirteen states have an Office of Gun Violence Prevention that streamlines efforts across state and local governments to support those most at-risk individuals by preventing and responding to instances of gun violence. Minnesota should join that list.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Carla Gillespie

March 1, 2026

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marcus Andrusko, and I am writing to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill that would establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in Minnesota. The bill would empower the Commissioner of Health to appoint a director with expertise in gun violence prevention and would require the Office to submit an annual report.

I experience the threat of gun violence from two directions at the same time. I'm a parent of four kids in school, and I'm also a community college instructor. That means I start most mornings thinking both about my own classroom and about whether my kids are safe in theirs. That's not how any parent or educator should have to begin the day.

As a parent, gun violence shows up in small, constant ways. I notice it when my kids tell me about lockdown drills as if they're normal, when we talk about where to go and what to do if something unthinkable happens, and when I feel that quiet knot in my stomach every time I drop them off. No parent should have to coach their children on survival strategies just to attend school.

As a teacher, I see the same weight carried by my students. Community college classrooms are filled with students who are already balancing work, family, finances, and stress. Layering fear on top of that makes learning harder and life heavier. When students are worried about their safety, it affects how present they can be, how openly they engage, and how much they trust the spaces meant to support them.

Gun violence doesn't just take lives. It steals peace of mind from families and educators every single day. The cost of inaction is paid in anxiety, distraction, and the normalization of fear. We can do better than accepting this as the price of education or community life.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668. Thank you for your time and for considering this testimony.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Andrusko', written in a cursive style.

Marcus Andrusko
Minnesota State Instructor
Edina, Minnesota
bw@mac.com
(612) 743-7700

TESTIMONY OF MICHELE M. ROEPKE FOR HF3668

VOLUNTEER FOR MOMS DEMAND ACTION

March 1, 2026

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members-

My name is Michele Roepke. I have been a proud Minnesotan for all my life, 71 years living Hennepin County (now Maple Grove). I am the mother and a grandmother and am quite concerned about the level of gun violence in our state and country and the lack of action taken to reduce, let alone prevent it.

I am testifying today in support of establishing an Office of Gun Violence Prevention because I believe, that while we have made some progress with sensible gun legislation in this state, there is more we need to do. While bi-partisan cooperation can be difficult around the legislation of guns and ammunition directly, this bill does not challenge the second amendment rights of any gun owners and could lead to better understanding and the reduction or prevention of future gun violence.

There are 13 other states that have established an Office of Gun Violence Prevention or Intervention. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention will help streamline efforts across state government and with community partners to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence.

This bill calls on the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to collect information and coordinate support and resources. I believe the collection and reporting of data around gun violence would give legislators and law enforcement valuable information to use to reduce the incidences of gun violence in our community.

I encourage members of this committee to vote YES on HF3668. Thank you for considering both my testimony and this important bill.

Michele M. Roepke

Maple Grove, MN

TESTIMONY OF CASSANDRA SARTOR for HF3668

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members-

My name is Cassandra Sartor. I have lived in Minnesota all of my 39 years and am a proud member of the Fridley community. I am a mother to an 8-year-old daughter who is in third grade here in Fridley. I am extremely concerned about the level of gun violence in our state and country, and even more so the lack of action taken to reduce/prevent it.

I am testifying today in support of establishing an Office of Gun Violence Prevention because I believe, that while we have made some progress with sensible gun legislation in this state, there is more we need to do. While bi-partisan cooperation can be difficult around the legislation of guns and ammunition directly, this bill doesn't challenge the second amendment rights of any gun owners and could lead to better understanding and the reduction or prevention of future gun violence.

There are 13 other states that have established an Office of Gun Violence Prevention or Intervention. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention will help streamline efforts across state government and with community partners to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence.

This bill calls on the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to collect information and coordinate support and resources. I believe the collection and reporting of data around gun violence would give legislators and law enforcement valuable information to use to reduce the incidences of gun violence in our community.

I encourage members of this committee to vote YES on HF3668.

Thank you for considering both my testimony and this important bill.

Cassandra Sartor

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer, and Committee Members,

My name is Chad Kuyper, and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the Commissioner of Health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence, and would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I'm a professor at Normandale Community College, which underwent a major construction project a few years ago. At a faculty meeting where the contractors explained our new office setup to us, the discussion point that took the most time and drew the most impassioned opinions was not whether our new offices were accessible to students with disabilities. It was not whether the restrooms were ideally situated; it wasn't even the coffee machine's new location.

It was whether our new offices were properly defended against an active shooter armed with an assault rifle.

Professors from every discipline peppered their questions with words like "sightlines" and "access points," and as the discussion wore on, I could feel myself getting angry that this is our new normal, an outlandish status quo enabled by civilian access to weapons of war.

Our state still bears the scars of Annunciation. Teachers and students go to class wondering if their school will be the site of the next tragedy – because there *will* be one. This is not what freedom what looks like. This is not what law and order looks like. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention is the most basic of steps to take, and an entirely reasonable one. I urge members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this urgent legislation.

Testimony of Delaney Keyes Voeller for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Delaney Keyes Voeller and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a Minneapolis resident and have many neighbor children who were shot at in the Annunciation shooting. I also had just dropped off my kindergartener that morning for his first day of school. No parent should ever have to see that news alert again and worry about their child's wellbeing.

I am also a children/adolescent mental health therapist specializing in trauma treatment. We are asked as mental health providers to intervene and prevent these traumatic acts by individuals, as though we will be psychic and know who will shoot up schools or churches - even those who never are referred for help. Instead we spend years and untold dollars treating the child victims and bystanders who never asked to be harmed.

My experience leads me to beg you to act. Take any steps we can as a community to prevent more children and families from being torn apart and left with visible and invisible scars.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Delaney Keyes Voeller
4629 Harriet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Testimony of Gretchen Damon for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members, and Committee Members,

My name is Gretchen Damon and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

Born and raised in Minnesota, I now live in St. Paul. My neighbor and good friend from college is the grandfather of an Annunciation student who was in the church when the shooting happened this fall. I will never forget talking with him about how upset he was about his granddaughter's close brush with death and how concerned he was that she would be traumatized long-term because of her experience. She is now a gun violence survivor. She is 8 years old.

I am testifying today because I am tired of lawmakers not taking enough action to prevent gun violence. The strengthened background checks law and the ERPO law are working and saving lives. We need more ways to prevent the daily toll of an average of 130 people dying every day due to firearm violence.

My experience leads me to emphasize the need for an office of gun violence prevention so there is a central place where common sense policies are understood and supported. 13 states have created such an office and would be an integral part of our work to combat gun violence in Minnesota. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) will help streamline efforts across state government and with community partners to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Gretchen Damon
St. Paul Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense

TESTIMONY OF JANICE McCLEMENT for HF3668

VOLUNTEER FOR MOMS DEMAND ACTION

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members-

My name is Janice McClement. I have been a proud Minnesotan for nearly 20 years, living first in Ramsey County, now in Hennepin (Plymouth). I am the mother of 4 and grandmother of 3 and am quite concerned about the level gun violence in our state and country and the lack of action taken to reduce, let alone prevent it.

I am testifying today in support of establishing an Office of Gun Violence Prevention because I believe, that while we have made some progress with sensible gun legislation in this state, there is more we need to do. While bi-partisan cooperation can be difficult around the legislation of guns and ammunition directly, this bill doesn't challenge the second amendment rights of any gun owners and could lead to better understanding and the reduction or prevention of future gun violence.

There are 13 other states that have established an Office of Gun Violence Prevention or Intervention. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention will help streamline efforts across state government and with community partners to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence.

This bill calls on the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to collect information and coordinate support and resources. I believe the collection and reporting of data around gun violence would give legislators and law enforcement valuable information to use to reduce the incidences of gun violence in our community.

I encourage members of this committee to vote YES on HF3668.

Thank you for considering both my testimony and this important bill.

Janice McClement

Testimony of Molly Chase for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Molly Chase and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I have decades of experience across sectors, including as a successful entrepreneur, a Fortune 500 business executive, and a nonprofit leader. I now put my experience to work as an operational efficiency consultant. I know from decades of experience that:

Focus + Measurement = Positive Outcomes

I am testifying today because:

Our state needs to apply focus and measurement to the urgent public safety issue of gun violence. Even my kindergartener knows this, as one of her first experiences at school was her first active shooter drill.

Today, I emphasize that an Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) will help streamline efforts to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence. Thirteen (13) states have already created such an office.

As an efficiency expert, a Minnesota mom and a Moms Demand Action Volunteer, I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Testimony of Sarah Geistfeld for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy Judiciary Committee

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Sarah Geistfeld, and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a resident of St. Louis Park, and formerly a resident of the Windom neighborhood of South Minneapolis where the Annunciation School is located.

I am testifying today because my oldest son, who turned 5 last week, will attend kindergarten this fall, and I am terrified. What should be a happy milestone is overshadowed by concern for his safety. Every decision, from what school he should attend to whether or not he can have light-up shoes, demands consideration from this angle. While there are certainly no guarantees, an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota would provide some comfort for scared parents everywhere that our state government is thinking about and actively working to solve these issues.

The rate of gun deaths has increased 34% from 2015 to 2024 in Minnesota, compared to an 18% increase nationwide. This means that in 2024 there were 172 more gun deaths than in 2015. This is clearly a growing issue in our state, and we need to address it head on.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Testimony of Angie Lillehei for HF 3668

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

1 Judiciary Committee

Jack Dockendorf, Hannah Zimmerman and Committee Members,

My name is Angie Lillehei and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3688, a bills to for the report requirement Office of Gun Violence Prevention established in the Department of Health, and to have money appropriated. I live in Minneapolis and I was personally impacted by the Mass shooting at Annunciation church.

I am testifying today because:

- I am a public health professional and believe in the need to collect data to be able to target gun sense actions for the gun violence epidemic we have in our country. My experience leads me to emphasize the need for the Office of Gun Violence in the Department of Health with reporting requirements and funding.

According to everytown.org gun violence is the number one killer of children in our country. For the State of Minnesota, gun violence is the number two killer of our children.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.
Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Testimony of Leah Kondes for HF 3668

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Leah Kondes, and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am the mother of three daughters. The oldest one was born in March of 1999, the month before semi-automatic weapons were used to kill thirteen people at Columbine High School in Colorado. My youngest daughter, just since I started volunteering with Moms Demand Action in 2019, has been at the mall for one of their shootings and the state fair for one of their shootings, and her campus was recently on lockdown due to the threat of gun violence.

I am testifying today because we the adults – the one that brought these children here – need to do something to protect kids against gun violence, the number one killer of children and teens in our country. I live less than two miles from Annunciation Church. What happened there easily could have happened at the church I attended for more than two decades, which is also less than two miles from Annunciation. While school shootings (or in this case a church shooting) are statistically rare, they are not rare enough. And these are not the first school shootings in Minnesota. There was a shooting in Red Lake in 2005 in which 10 people were killed with semi-automatic weapons. There was also a shooting at Rocori High School in 2003 in which two students were killed with a semi-automatic pistol.

My experience leads me to emphasize this today: What gets measured gets managed. Thirteen states have created such an office and would be an integral part of our work to combat gun violence in Minnesota. An Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) will help streamline efforts across state government and with community partners to effectively support the most at-risk individuals and communities in preventing and responding to instances of gun violence.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668. Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer and Committee Members,

My name is Barbara Landes and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the office to submit an annual report.

I am a retired elementary school teacher, and a long-time resident of Apple Valley. During the last half of my teaching career, I was imminently aware of the dangers of gun violence as our school made, reviewed and practiced regular drills to respond to the possibility of an active shooter in/on our property. Believe me, we took that threat seriously and had detailed instructions about the many possible scenarios that could endanger the students in our care.

In 2014 the mass shooting at Sandy Hook occurred. Thinking of those innocent six year old children massacred in their classroom still brings me to tears. What horror that their parents couldn't even hold them as they died. And, now we have had yet another fatal attack here in Minnesota, most recently at Annunciation school. This shooting prompted me to join Moms Demand Action for Gun Safety. I'm not even a mom, but I recognize the need for better gun legislation in our state. Minnesota has the 43rd highest rate of gun deaths in the US. Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in our country. The leading cause of death!

The time to act is now. The bill before you presents clear and effective steps to regulate Ghost Guns among other needed steps. Creating an Office of Gun Violence Prevention is the wisest thing you could do to help make our state safer for everyone.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on the important legislation.

Respectfully,
Barbara Landes

Testimony of Kristen Lyrek for HF 3368
Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America
Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy

Chair Moller, Chair Novotny and Committee Members,

My name is Kristen Lyrek and I am writing today to urge the committee to support HF 3668, a bill which would establish an office of gun violence prevention in Minnesota. It would empower the commissioner of health to appoint a director knowledgeable about issues related to gun violence. The bill would require the Director of the Office to submit an annual report.

I am a resident of Saint Paul, educator, wife, and mother of two young elementary students. I care deeply about gun control for these reasons. I also care deeply about gun control because of the unimaginable tragedy that our good friends, Mollie and Jesse Merkel, now live with every single day. The loss of their precious and innocent son, Fletcher Merkel, on August 27, 2025.

I am testifying today because the grief our friends now carry is beyond words — and not something I can accurately articulate. Yet they don't have a choice but to walk this path they did not ask for, did not ever imagine, every single day. A path that was forged for them by yes, a very unwell person — but a very unwell person who was able to legally purchase and then use catastrophic and deadly firearms to kill 2 innocent children and permanently alter the innocent minds of thousands more.

My children do not attend Annunciation but the ripple effect of gun violence is real.

The day before they started their new year of school we had to sit them down to tell them that one of their dad's best friends lost his son. And we had to tell them how. Because when you lose someone that close to you, you do not get to skim the details and preserve your child's innocence. You don't get to cradle the future of their mental health when they ask questions about if this could happen to them. You don't get to pretend it won't happen to you. You drop them off at school each day, watch them walk in, and hope that you get to give them an after school snack.

My experience leads me to emphasize the need for an Office of Gun Violence Prevention. This office would be a step towards preventing and reducing gun violence —something we desperately need for the future of our children. I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 3668.

Thank you for considering this testimony and this important legislation.