

Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Chair: Representative Kelly Moller

HF 396, 14, 15, 601

Friday February 3, 2023 at 8:30 AM
Capitol Room 120

IN SUPPORT

As a family physician, St. Paul resident, and concerned aunt of 4 school-aged children in the St. Paul Public Schools, I am testifying in strong support of House Files 396, 14, 15, and 601. Gun violence is a public health crisis. Firearms are now the number one killer of children and teens in our country. This is absolutely unacceptable. We owe it to our patients, friends and neighbors, families, and above all our children to do everything we can to create a safe environment for them to grow, play, learn, and work. HF 396, 14, 15, and 601 are crucial steps in that direction. By requiring criminal background checks on private gun transfers, reporting of missing or stolen guns, and safe firearm storage, as well as providing law enforcement and families with a necessary tool (“red flag law”) to pursue temporary removal of firearms from people in crisis, these bills will help keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers, suicidal loved ones, curious children, and would-be violent criminals. These bills will save lives.

For far too long, obstruction has prevented our state leaders from passing common-sense gun safety bills. Minnesotans have been waiting years for these actions, and meanwhile the human and financial toll of the gun violence epidemic has continued to grow. While no one law will prevent every gun injury or death, HF 396, 14, 15, and 601 will significantly strengthen our state’s gun safety laws. Research shows that states with stronger gun safety laws have less gun injuries and deaths. All Minnesota communities and children deserve urgent action from our leaders to do everything possible to keep guns out of the hands of those who are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others, while still respecting the Second Amendment. This can and must be done.

The time is now for the Minnesota Legislature to take action to help turn the tide on the public health crisis of gun violence. Passing these bills will be a significant step in that direction.

Thank you very much for working to make our communities safe places to live and raise the next generations of Minnesotans.

Emily Benzie, M.D.
Family Physician
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