

Written testimony for Fri Feb 3rd hearing- HF 396, 14, 15, and 601- gun safety measures

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Sent: Thursday, February 2, 1:17
PM

Hello,

I would like to submit written testimony in support of HF 396, HF14, HF15, and HF 601 to support improving gun safety measures in our state.

As a mental health therapist I have worked with the devastating effects of gun violence. From families who've lost a child to accidental gunshot, teens and adults contemplating or completing suicide, families, workplaces, and communities terrorized by guns, domestic violence, and families devastated by loss to homicide or mass shootings. One main contributor to a difficult time becoming an irreversible tragedy

is guns.

76% of gun deaths in Minnesota are by firearm suicide. This is significantly higher than the national average of 59% and a shocking public health emergency.

Guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens in Minnesota. This demands our attention.

As a helping professional I also know the impact of unsecured weapons on Police, EMS, Firefighters, Healthcare workers, and Mental health clinicians as we are frequently threatened with weapons or killed while trying to do our jobs. I myself had a gun put to my chest unexpectedly while meeting a family of a disabled person when I was a County Social Worker. In a state conference with colleagues we were asked if we had been directly threatened with a gun while working and more than half of attendees raised their hands. We've recently seen several police officers shot in Minnesota by individuals who should not have had access to weapons. It didn't used to be this way and we are losing good professionals every day from these fields due to long term

trauma from these events. We can do better.

Sensible gun safety measures like those proposed in the following bills would shore up or add increased safety to our laws to help all of us protect each other and our children and families from these devastating effects of gun violence.

None of the measures submitted would restrict responsible gun ownership in any way.

I want to urge lawmakers to act with urgency to pass these reasonable and responsible measures that can help increase gun safety, close loopholes utilized by criminals and desperate people, and prevent the horrible impacts I see in my work and community every day.

We owe this not only to ourselves and our communities, but to our children and their futures. They are watching us and if we fail to act to protect them, then we are all responsible for causing their deaths.

Thank you for your time and dedication to public service.

With great respect,

Louise Ouradnik, MSW, LICSW

Proposed legislation to improve gun safety in Minnesota:

HF 396 (Becker-Finn) Safe storage of firearms and ammunition required, locking device required to be included in each firearm transfer, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF 14 (Pinto) Criminal background checks required for all firearm transfers, and grounds modified for disqualification of transferee permit.

HF 15 (Frazier) Law enforcement and family members enabled to petition a court to prohibit people from possessing firearms if they pose a significant danger to themselves or others by possessing a firearm, and money appropriated.

HF 601 (Her) Lost and stolen firearms required to be reported promptly to law enforcement.