

Testimony of Gretchen Damon,

Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America,

February 29th, 2023, 10:30AM

Good afternoon, Chairman Moller, Committee members, and staff. Thank you for acknowledging my testimony today.

My name is Gretchen Damon.

I am a life-long resident of Minnesota. I am proud to live in St. Paul. I love my work at St. Catherine University as a gardener. However, gun violence is frightening me. The multiple homicides by gun in the city is disturbing. Guns are being stolen from cars and used in crimes. It is hard to read about children unintentionally shooting one another with an unattended gun. Students are bringing guns to area high schools and that is alarming. Gun suicides are striking people around me with grief.

I am testifying today in support of HF4300 strengthening requirements for secure storage of firearms and ammunition. Guns are the leading cause of death among kids and teens in Minnesota, and requiring secure storage is vital to saving lives.

There are too many guns out there and too few people storing them securely. With the millions of firearms acquired during the pandemic and during the social unrest following the murder of George Floyd, it is no wonder there is so much gun violence. I get concerned for my family members who go to work, school, movie theaters, concerts, etc.---wondering whether there will be a shooting where they are going. We shouldn't have to live like this.

An average of 43 children and teens die by guns every year in Minnesota, of which 49% of these deaths are suicides.

I encourage members of the committee to vote YES on HF 4300.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.