

To: House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Ellen McDaniel - administrator

I am writing in strong support of HF 4300 and HF 601.

The Declaration of Independence invokes certain inalienable rights, among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The gun culture in the United States prevents enjoying these rights as the flood of available firearms create a climate of fear and intimidation. The recent murder of three first responders in Burnsville highlights the danger to all residents. Over this last weekend, armed juveniles committed a crime spree in the City of Minneapolis. These are just a few recent examples of unauthorized individuals using firearms in the commission of violent crimes.

When I was growing up, rifles and shotguns were common in my family and neighborhood, and we were taught to respect these hunting tools. Before we could get a hunting license, we had to take and pass a Hunters Safety course, which also taught us about the proper handling of guns, including keeping track of them, cleaning them, proper storage and transport.

Fanatical adherents of gun rights would have us believe that firearm ownership cannot be restricted by regulation. Many gun rights groups, such as the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus are dedicated to stopping any and all new gun ownership regulations and overturning existing regulations and that owning a firearm has no personal responsibility. The firearm industry exerts undue influence over elected politicians and appointed judges.

Guns are devices designed to expel a projectile using pressure or explosive force. Guns can be used for hunting or for personal protection. The purpose of shooting a gun is to kill or maim the intended target. This awesome power requires the owner/shooter to accept personal responsibility for the weapon and the associated consequences of its use.

HF 4300 and HF 601 require owners of firearm to keep track of their guns and to safely store them away from unauthorized users, including convicted felons and children. Opponents of these regulations claim that these measures are unnecessary and infringe on the rights of law abiding citizens. Clearly, with the number of guns currently being used in criminal activities and not-so-random shootings, gun owners need to control access to and the use their guns.