

Minnesota House of Representatives Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

Chair: Representative Kelly Moller

HF 3672

Tuesday March 12, 2024, at 10:30 AM

State Office Building, Room 200

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Moller and members of the House Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee,

Preemption law makes it impossible for local governments to protect their residents from gun violence. What may work for International Falls or Red Wing, doesn't necessarily work for Duluth or St. Paul. Preemption law in Minnesota handicaps local policymakers from creating tailored solutions to gun violence in their communities. By making it impossible to pass gun safety ordinances stronger than existing state law, individual municipalities are held captive by policy developed at the state level. For example, because there is no Minnesota statute for secure firearm storage (yet), no local government can fully adopt this policy without looking over their shoulder for legal challenges. This situation traps residents into experiencing the consequences of unsecure guns: suicide, unintentional shootings among children, stolen guns ending up in the hands of criminals, and so on.

State preemption laws override common sense by limiting cities and counties wracked with gun violence to the identical laws that apply to rural areas where responsible gun ownership is more embedded in daily life. The Twin Cities experience unacceptable levels of gun homicide, while outstate Minnesota faces rates of gun suicide higher than the national average. The leaders of these contrasting communities should be able to make policy that works to save the lives of people who live among them.

I believe legislators need to be the voices of their constituents while also being leaders when it comes to evidence-based, common-sense policies that benefit the people they represent. Furthermore, not all constituents are of voting age. Children deserve to live without gun violence. Firearms are now the leading cause of death for children and teens in America. Preemption law prohibits local leaders from enacting sound policy that will turn this trend around. It is time to enact evidence-based, common sense gun safety laws at the state level and allow them to be passed at the local level, as well.

Respectfully,

Gretchen Damon

St. Paul, MN