

To: Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
From: Elizabeth Christensen, Northfield
Re: In Support of HF 396 and 601 Date: 2/2/2023

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

I am a resident of Northfield and I am writing in support of HF 396. Expanding safe storage requirements will save lives from multiple sources of gun violence: unintentional shootings, crime-related gun violence (facilitated by stolen guns), suicide, school and other mass shootings. It will send a clear message to irresponsible gun owners: lock up your firearms when they are not in your immediate control or be held accountable.

Every day, eight children are unintentionally shot or killed by a gun.¹ Securely stored firearms—whether loaded or not—would prevent most of these tragedies. It is simple; safe storage laws work and save lives, and they do not infringe on the rights of individuals to own a firearm. Studies have repeatedly shown that safe storage results in a reduction in the rates of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers by up to 85%.² Kids are curious and are developmentally prone to be risk-takers. As adults, we should be responsible for preventing unsupervised access to deadly weapons. Lax storage of firearms contributes to many forms of gun violence. More than 80% of child firearm suicides use a gun belonging to a family member.³ In 75% of cases, guns used in school shootings came from the shooter's home or that of a relative.⁴

On average, a gun is stolen in the U.S. every two minutes.⁵ Evidence suggests that most gun thefts are from owners who leave them unsecured in unlocked homes or cars and studies show that most guns recovered from crime scenes were stolen.⁶ Requiring gun owners to securely store their firearms will limit these thefts and their use in crimes. With that in mind, I encourage you to also support HF 601, which would require lost and stolen firearms to be reported promptly to law enforcement.

Please support common sense gun legislation and do your part to make HF 396 and HF 601 law.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Christensen
Northfield, Minnesota

¹ Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, "Key Statistics." <https://www.bradyunited.org/key-statistics>

² Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. JAMA. 2005; 293(6): 707-714

³Everytown Research. "Firearm Suicide in the United States," Dec 28, 2021.
https://everytownresearch.org/report/firearm-suicide-in-the-united-states/#foot_note_40

⁴ Most Guns Used in School Shootings Come From Home, Wall Street Journal, Apr 5, 2018

⁵ Center for American Progress, "Stolen Guns in America," Jul 25, 2017.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/stolen-guns-america/>

⁶ Center for American Progress, "Stolen Guns in America," Jul 25, 2017.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/stolen-guns-america/>