



February 2nd, 2023

Re: House File 396 – Safe storage of firearms and ammunition required; locking device required to be included in each firearm transfer, and criminal penalties imposed.

Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus, the trusted voice of Minnesota’s gun owners to defend and restore the right to keep and bear arms, opposes House File 396.

Our opposition is grounded in the following challenges with the bill that impact the core right of self-defense within the Second Amendment and create specific additional safety challenges for gun owners:

- Current law as defined in MN 609.666 prohibits the negligent storage of a loaded firearm in a location where a child is likely to gain access. We believe this is the right approach rather than mandating a specific method of storage that impedes the right to possess a firearm for the purpose of self-defense.
- This bill would prohibit a safe action that currently happens thousands of times a day across the state, where a law enforcement officer or Permit to Carry holder places a loaded firearm in a quick access safe that is designed for this purpose and secures their firearm.
 - Instead, this law will require them to unload the firearm and store it separately from its ammunition.
 - This will impact Permit to Carry holders in numerous situations that happen regularly today when they must enter an area where carry is prohibited. For example, current law allows a Permit to Carry holder to park at a K-12 school to pick up their children, disarm and store their firearm in their vehicle with a locking device or quick access safe, and enter the school for pickup. If passed, they must disarm, separate the firearm and ammunition, and then enter the school – and reverse the process when leaving.
 - This will increase the likelihood of a negligent discharge or other incident due to the repeated handling of the firearm.

The logo features a yellow, hand-drawn square with a rough, textured border. To the right of the square, the words "GUN OWNERS" are stacked above "CAUCUS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

GUN OWNERS CAUCUS

- This bill also essentially eliminates the ability of using a firearm for self-defense except when a firearm is being actively carried.
 - Many individuals store loaded firearms safely in quick access safes in their home – under this bill, firearms and ammunition must be stored separately.
 - Obtaining access to both and reloading a firearm quickly under stress in a self-defense situation is not reasonable and negatively impacts the Second Amendment right to possess firearms in one's home for self-defense.
- The guarantee of criminal immunity is more than enough incentive to gain compliance to these requirements.
- This bill does not differentiate between someone who has no contact with children and prohibited persons – and others who do.

We understand that Representative Becker-Finn, the bill's Chief Author, and others may offer amendments to alleviate some of our concerns with this bill.

On behalf of our members,

A blue ink signature that reads "Bryan Strawser".

Bryan Strawser
Chair

A black ink signature that reads "Robert T. Doar".

Robert T. Doar
Senior Vice President, Government Relations