

Testimony of Molly Leutz
Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
February 29th, 2024, 10:30 AM

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

My name is Molly Leutz

I am a lifetime resident of Minnesota, born and raised in Minneapolis. I have been a gun violence prevention advocate volunteering with Moms Demand Action for 8 years.

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. As a teenager, my good friend's brother shot himself while mishandling a family firearm, nearly losing his leg and his life. As a parent, I read and hear countless stories of children shooting themselves and others with guns they should not have access to. No matter how much I talk about the danger with my kids, I know that it only takes moments of access and negligence to forever change their lives.

My experience leads me to emphasize today that it is the responsibility of adults to securely store guns and ammunition so that they do not fall into the hands of minors. Kids are curious, and the consequences of unsecured firearms are devastating.

An average of 43 children and teens die by gun every year in Minnesota, and 49% of those deaths are suicides. Without access to a firearm in a moment of crisis, research shows that the majority of those kids would not go on to die by suicide

Despite the glaring risk to children and communities, the majority of gun owners do not secure their firearms, and 4.6 million children in the U.S. live in homes with unsecured firearms.

HF 4300 would require that a firearm be securely stored when it is not being carried by or is not under the control of its owner or another authorized user. The bill would require that unattended firearms be stored unloaded with a locking device, and separately from ammunition. Laws that require proper storage seek to encourage responsible behavior, and ensure that those who fail to secure their firearms can be held accountable.

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.