

February 2, 2023

Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota State Capitol, Room 120

Dear Representatives,

I am writing today in support of multiple proposed bills that are before your committee: HF 396 (Becker-Finn) and HF 15 (Frazier).

I am a primary care physician and am board certified in both Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. While I do not see the immediate trauma of gun violence in our community, I have the responsibility of caring for patients both before and after gun violence changes their lives.

Every day, I treat patients for depression and anxiety, and every day I wonder and worry about whether these patients have easy access to firearms. Suicides in Minnesota account for roughly three quarters of gun related deaths. Many of these deaths would be preventable with laws that would restrict the access of firearms to individuals who are in crisis (HF 15 Frazier) and laws that would enforce the secure storage of firearms (HF 396 Becker-Finn), keeping them out of the hands of minors who should not otherwise have access to these weapons. While some suicides are pre-meditated, many are not. Adolescents, who are still developing their prefrontal cortex (the area of the brain that allows for complex thinking and understanding of consequences) are particularly at risk for making hasty decisions without considering the long-term effects of these choices. Both safe storage laws and laws to restrict access to individuals in crisis will help protect these vulnerable individuals and keep them alive so that they can access the treatments that they need.

I also care for the people that you don't always hear about – the families and friends of those lost to gun violence, and those in its path. I manage the PTSD and anxiety of the mother who was the first to find her daughter who committed suicide with a gun. I treat the depression of another mother who lost her son to gun-related homicide. I worry about the safety of the 12 year-old who tells me that she knows people that bring guns to her school. Please, help me keep our children safe, and help all Minnesotans to stay safe from unnecessary and preventable gun violence. It is the least we can do to help protect our communities and our state.

I ask you all to please consider passing out of committee (and encouraging your colleagues to vote for) both HF 15 (Frazier) and HF 396 (Becker-Finn). Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

Sarah McIntire, MD
Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
M Health Fairview
Eagan, MN