



Representatives Jessica E. Miranda
Democratic Whip
State Representative for the 28th House District

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for giving Representative Brewer and I the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 175. The Keep Every Home Safe Act is a vital piece of legislation that will help keep our homes and communities safer.

June is Gun Violence Awareness Month. Gun Violence is an increasing epidemic, both nationally and here in Ohio. In a recent Fox News poll, people were asked what they thought the most important issue facing the country is today. Gun Violence was ranked the 3rd behind the economy and inflation. There are around 1,600 gun deaths in Ohio each year and guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Ohio. Something needs to be done about gun violence in Ohio.

About 1/3 of American children live in homes with firearms. Of those households, 43% contain at least one unlocked firearm. The presence of guns in a house that are not safely storage increase the risk of both unintentional gun injuries and intentional gun shootings. Attached to my testimony is a list of news stories where children have accessed unlocked guns in their homes and the devastating consequences. The Keep Every Home Safe Act would require the secure storage of firearms. When a firearm is not in possession of the owner or other person legally eligible to handle it, the firearm must be in a secure storage device or rendered inoperable by a locking device and also stored in a place where those prohibited from using the firearm cannot reasonably gain access to the firearm. Safe storage laws keep firearms away from children. But it also keeps firearms away from convicted felons and those that should not have access to a firearm due to mental health or other issues.

This bill will authorize an income tax credit for the purchase of firearm storage and locking devices. This bill will also ensure access to free or low-cost mental health and wellness services for households impacted by a child-involved shooting; it will also provide resources to educate the public on securely storing their firearms. This bill does not take away anyone's right to a firearm. It ensures that those who choose to possess a firearm are doing so safely and only those who have ownership or legal permission to handle the firearm are the ones handling the firearm.

26 states have enacted some sort of safe storage law, including Florida and Texas. The Keep Every Home Safe Act is a balanced solution for a growing problem in our state. We must do

what we can to keep firearms from getting into the wrong hands. In 2012, Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 children and 6 adult staff members. Safe storages laws would have prevented this man from gaining access to the firearms he used that horrific day. We have the opportunity to preempt and prevent the next Sandy Hook from happening. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Representative Brewer.

News Stories across Ohio and the United States of Children Gaining Access to Firearms

Ohio

Prosecutor: 6 year old shoots & kills 3 year old, father left loaded gun ‘easily accessible’ (October 23, 2022)

- <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/cincinnati/madisonville/police-child-shot-and-killed-in-madisonville>

Columbus man charged after child caught on camera shooting gun (April 11, 2023)

- <https://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/columbus-man-charged-matthew-rivas-negligent-safe-storage-firearm-gun-child-endangerment-safety-video-zach-klein>

Police: Child shot himself in Middletown park after picking up unsecured gun (April 12, 2023)

- <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/butler-county/middletown/police-child-shot-himself-in-middletown-park-after-picking-up-unsecured-gun>

16 year old dies weeks after being shot while playing with handgun in southeast Columbus (April 23, 2023)

- <https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/1-teen-shot-another-in-custody-after-playing-with-handguns-in-southeast-columbus/530-ca664a84-cf4f-4043-951c-9f524c4562cb>

7 year old girl shot by younger brother on Cleveland’s East Side, police say (May 24, 2023)

- <https://www.cleveland19.com/2023/05/24/7-year-old-girl-shot-clevelands-east-side/>

United States

A 6 year old shot a Virginia teacher with his mother’s gun. The tragedy highlights the lack of strong secure storage laws across the nation (January 15, 2023)

- <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/15/us/virginia-child-shooting-secure-storage-laws/index.html>

Beech Grove man charged after 4 year old seen on live TV with a gun (January 16, 2023)

- <https://www.wthr.com/article/news/crime/beece-grove-man-arrested-after-toddler-seen-on-live-tv-with-a-gun-indiana-on-patrol-live/531-2125ccda-0d93-4226-916f-5c0e0e1c728a>

Woman injured after child fires gun inside Wendell home (March 26, 2023)

- <https://www.wral.com/story/woman-injured-after-child-fires-gun-inside-wendell-home/20781933/>

Arlington Toddler Dies After Accidentally Shooting Self with Gun Found in Home (April 4, 2023)

- <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/arlington-toddler-dies-after-accidentally-shooting-self-with-gun-found-in-home/3230467/>

5 year old shot and killed inside Calumet City home (April 7, 2023)

- <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/child-shot-inside-calumet-city-home/>

In America, Accidental Shooting Among Children Occur Nearly Every Other Day (June 1, 2023)

- <https://www.thetrace.org/2023/06/children-gun-safety-accidental-shootings/>