

Testimony for House Bill 186  
Ways and Means Committee  
September 24, 2023  
Submitted by: Jennifer Georgic

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy and esteemed members of the Committee. My name is Jennifer Georgic, I am a 37-year resident of Delaware County, Ohio. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 186.

Any accidental death or injury by firearms is one too many. What is tragic becomes compounded when it is the death or injury of a child who has gained access to an unsecured firearm. This summer Nationwide Children's Hospital released a study ([https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/newsroom/news-releases/2023/06/peds\\_firearm\\_fatalities](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/newsroom/news-releases/2023/06/peds_firearm_fatalities)) it is a must read for all those who care about child safety and the lives of children.

Astoundingly the study reports that, "most unintentional firearm fatalities in which a child shoots another child involve boys, occur in the child's home or at the home of a friend, and involve firearms that were stored loaded and unlocked." Let me repeat that again ... *firearms that were stored loaded and unlocked!* It not only makes sense to encourage purchasing and utilizing firearms safety devices with the benefit of a tax exemption, but it can be viewed as a public health imperative! If one child is saved, if one preventable death is avoided using a firearms safety device, we the citizens of Ohio are the better for it.

A quick search in the Columbus Dispatch enumerates the number of unintentional shooting deaths of children in central Ohio. And yet another excerpt from the Nationwide Children's Hospital study reads:

"Keeping firearms safely stored and out of the hands of children is key to preventing these deaths. Other studies have shown that policies that mandate gun locks and safe storage have been associated with a reduction in adolescent firearm-related suicides and unintentional firearm fatalities among young children."

Gun owners truly can make their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and families safer by storing their guns safely and securely. Data from the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) shows that secure storage lessens the chance of unintentional shootings by children as well as misuse.

House Bill 186 specifies a sales tax exemption on firearm safety devices. This is a commonsense approach to encouraging and supporting those who own guns to utilize the tools to keep all in a household and without, safe from harm. It promotes responsible gun ownership and helps to prevent unintentional shootings.

I respectfully ask that you support House Bill 186.