

Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee

Proponent Testimony SB 273

Submitted By Patricia Krummrich

To Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Weinstein and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pat Krummrich and I live in West Chester near Cincinnati. I typically vote Democratic and support common sense gun safety measures. I am pleased to support SB 273 because I believe it will decrease veteran suicide as well as helping to safeguard family and community members who are often injured or killed during veteran acts of combined suicide/homicide. I believe this bill shows that reducing gun suicide is truly a bipartisan issue. We ALL want to "Keep Them Safe".

In 2022, my younger brother, Chief Warrant Officer 2nd Class, Karl Phares, committed suicide after suffering from PTSD for years. Karl had served in a forward operation base in Afghanistan and then later in Iraq. One day he decided he'd had enough and before his wife, who was present, could stop him, he killed himself. One thing that I learned from my brother's suicide is that when you call the Suicide Hot Line for help, one of the first things they ask you is "Is there a gun in the house?" This is followed by "If there is, get it out of the house". The question my brother's wife asked was, "Then where do I put it?" This bill would make it easier for federally licensed gun shops to store a veteran's gun in times of crisis. It would more clearly define legal guidelines for doing so and protect gun shops from unfair liability.

According to the 2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, 6,392 Veterans died by suicide in 2021, reflecting an increase of 11.6% over the previous year. (1) It's impossible to talk about preventing Veteran Suicide without talking about gun violence. According to the Military Times, the VA has zeroed in on gun safety as a way to reduce veteran suicide. The vast majority of people who attempt suicide do not die. Only about

5% of people attempting suicide, use a gun. But guns are deadly almost every time, and so end up accounting for 75% of veteran suicide deaths. (2)

The VA reports that nearly half of all Veterans own one or more firearms and that, despite their gun training, many veterans do not practice responsible firearm and ammunition storage. The report goes on to say that “removing firearms from the home is ideal for those at risk of suicide.” (1)

Therefore, I thank Senator Koehler for introducing SB273 and urge the committee to pass it.

Respectfully,

Patricia Krummrich

Sources:

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomchiodo/2024/02/22/secure-firearm-storage-key-to-preventing-veteran-suicides/?sh=52bee5f47955>
2. <https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2021/09/22/va-zeroes-in-on-gun-safety-as-a-way-to-reduce-veteran-suicides/>

Suggested Reading:

- American Psychological Association.  
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/11/preventing-veteran-suicide>