

Testimony on House Bill 186
Ways and Means Committee
September 26, 2023
Submitted by:
Andrea Kovesdi

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy and members of the committee. My name is Andrea Kovesdi and I am a lifelong Ohioan and a married mother of two adult children who also reside in Ohio. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 186.

There are an estimated 393 million civilian-owned firearms in the United States, and more than one-third of homes contain at least one gun. Over 4.5 million children in the US live in a home with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm. Last month, a 4 year old boy in Akron obtained an unsecured gun and shot himself. He died from his injuries a week later. Earlier this year there was a spate of unintentional shootings in the Columbus area in which a 13 year old and a 16 year old were hospitalized and an 8 year old shot himself in the face. Columbus police received 38 reports of accidental shootings in Columbus through April, two of which were fatal. In 2023, there have been at least 22 unintentional shootings by children in Ohio, resulting in 7 deaths and 16 injuries.

There is a recent study by Nationwide Children's Hospital on unintentional shootings involving kids younger than 15 years old. [The study](#) found that in **92%** of the incidents, the guns used were left loaded and unlocked. Unintentional shootings with unsecured guns is not strictly an Ohio problem but as Ohio lawmakers you are in a unique position to try and prevent these sorts of tragedies from happening here.

Gun owners can make their homes and communities safer by storing their guns securely. There is data to show that secure storage lessens the likelihood of unintentional shootings by children. I have included a link to that data here:

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/notanaccident/#impact-of-gun-storage-policies>

House Bill 186 merely asks for a sales tax exemption on firearm safety devices. There is nothing partisan about it. It is a straightforward way to promote responsible gun ownership and to help prevent unintentional shootings. Why not give gun owners further incentive to ensure that their guns do not get into the wrong hands whether those are children's hands or someone who intends to do harm with that gun? I ask that you support House Bill 186.