

Testimony on House Bill 186
Ways and Means Committee

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Submitted by:

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Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy and members of the Committee: My name is Kathleen McGorray. I am a lifelong Ohioan and a career educator, retired. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in favor of House Bill 186.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States – a shocking, sobering statistic. Every year 18,000 children and teens are shot and killed or wounded and approximately 3 million are exposed to gun violence. Over 4.5 million children in the US live in a home with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm. Just last month, an Akron 4-year-old got hold of an unsecured gun and shot himself; he died from his injuries a week later. Unintentional shootings in Columbus earlier this year included an 8-year-old who shot himself in the face. There were 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 Ohio children, resulting in 7 deaths and 16 injuries.

Gun owners can make their homes and communities safer by storing their guns securely – locked, unloaded, separate from ammunition. Secure storage practices play a vital role in reducing the risk of gun violence. Locking and storing firearms securely protects children and adults - by preventing unintentional shootings, gun suicides, and gun theft. All Ohioans are safer when guns are locked and securely stored.

House Bill 186 asks for a sales tax exemption on firearm safety devices, a measure that all Ohioans can support. This is a straightforward way to promote responsible gun ownership and help prevent unintentional shootings. It will encourage gun owners to ensure that their firearms do not get into the hands of children, or of someone who intends to do harm.

Please support House Bill 186. Thank you.