



Volunteer Testimony

SB 646- SUPPORT

Child Access Prevention Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage

Requirements

Lesley Bigden

Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee

February 20, 2020

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

On September 11th 2001 I was across the street when the first plane hit the North Tower. I thought that was going to be the worst day of my life for the rest of my life but it isn't December 14th, 2012 is when a family member of mine was taken at Sandy Hook.

For the past seven years I have been reluctant to speak about it as I feel it is my step sister's story and deeply respect her efforts in social and emotional education. However, this December Day impacts me every day as I now have a first grader and find myself in constant fear. I drop her off every morning at her school being sure that the last thing she hears me say is 'I love you'. And as she walks into school I wonder if that is the last time I will see her smile or hear her sweet voice.

No one should go through what my step sister has gone through. My father the only grandfather Jesse ever knew mourns every day. Our family will never be the same. The town of Newtown where they still reside will never be the same.

And we need to do everything in our power to prevent from this ever happening to a town in Maryland. This is your job to ensure our schools and communities are safer and the only way that happens is with stronger gun laws. Because strong words of sympathy after an incident like this is not good enough. You need to do everything in your power to make sure people with social emotional problems don't get access to firearms and cause devastation that people will NEVER recover from.

I struggle with being here as I prefer to be behind the scenes. That is what my profession has been for the past 23 years. Setting up events ensuring from behind the curtains that they are executed perfectly. But on the topic of Gun Violence I can no longer be silent. Not when gun violence is the 2nd leading cause of death in children. Not when 2,700 children are dying each year. Not when there are 4.6 million children in this country living with an unsecured loaded firearm.

People in this country no longer have the ability to be complacent on this topic because it is taking away our 1st Amendment rights. When we are afraid to go to the movies, when we are afraid to worship in our churches, when I am afraid to send my 1st grader to school. It is your job as our representatives to make us safer. I encourage you to pass HB 636 to ensure that our children are safer as they don't make the decision to have a firearm in the house and there needs to be accountability.