



Volunteer Testimony

HB 636- SUPPORT

Child Access Prevention Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements

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House Judiciary

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Dear Mr. Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am a retired factory owner with a career of safety responsibility around dangerous machinery and a former armament maintenance officer for the US Army.

I want to make two points in this testimony. One is that gun owners believe they are more responsible with their weapons than they are actually are. And two is that the risk to children grows ever greater as the lethality of weapons continually increases.

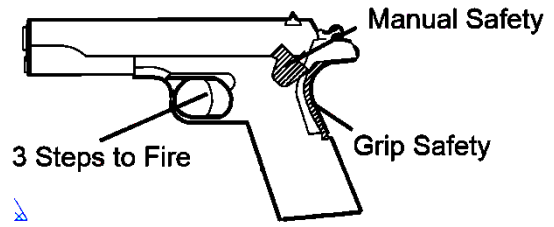
Gun owners are too nonchalant about safeguarding weapons. We have all heard about the child taking a gun out of the mother's purse. Believing that they need immediate access, too many gun owners casually leave them around or tote them around. More and more people are treating guns like any other object such as an umbrella or laptop. Here is a startling example. TSA, which does the airport screenings, reports that each year they find more guns in carry-on luggage. Last year alone, they seized 4,432. Alarmingly, 87% were loaded and 1,507 of the guns had a round in the chamber. Such passengers apparently ignored the law and did not think twice about who would have access to their weapons or who could be injured by them. To make matters worse, the number of guns found by TSA has been increasing rapidly, doubling every five years. Those who bring guns to checkpoints are similar to people who leave guns exposed to children. They are forgetful and irresponsible. As more guns are sold and carried, the risks go up and safeguards must be legislated.

2009 – 976 Guns.

2019 – 4,432 Guns (3,863 loaded)

If the number of guns left out for kids to find is growing at anywhere near the rate of guns left in carry-on luggage, we're in real trouble. The bill is designed to combat that growth.

Almost as bad as this fast growth in irresponsibility, is the growth in dangerousness and lethality of modern guns. While gun manufacturers have produced more lethal bullets and larger magazine sizes, they have removed critical safety features. Today's guns do not have safety switches and levers, which prevent the gun from firing if the user is not intending it. To sell instant "stopping power," they have changed guns so that a child is much more likely to discharge a weapon while playing with it. Unfortunately, adults also play with guns—a lot.



Here is the kind of pistol I learned to shoot in the Army with safety switches to prevent unwanted discharge. At that time guns were generally stored with no round made ready to fire without cocking the gun. Today guns are much more dangerous in little hands. And, it has become very common to keep a round in the chamber to allow firing at a touch of the finger without any preparation.



This bill is critical to protect our children from this expanding source of death and injury.