

Testimony Against HB200 Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements (Jaelynn's Law)

My Name is Karla Mooney I reside at 21175 Marigold Street, Leonardtown, in 5th District– District 29C

I absolutely do not agree with changing the definition of a child to a person under 18, when it comes to the ability to use a firearm in self-defense. Also, I know as a Firearms Instructor that Children under the age of 16 who have taken a full Department of Natural resources Hunters Safety course have the ability to have access legally for self defense and also to hunt. Also in the bill there are severe penalties and prison time that come from vague statements that would be impossible to follow and comply with. Why would there be an exemption to allow hunting, but the bill states the ammunition must be locked where it is not accessible to a child. The bill would give great burden to the parents of children who are hunters as they would no longer be compliant if they let their kids go out and hunt- making them a criminal for having ammunition. The writing and restrictions seem arbitrary and discriminatory and would effectively crush hunting in this state.

I believe many children across the United States save themselves and their siblings from break ins in the home daily, this takes away their right to defend themselves and makes them and their parents criminals for just having a firearm.

Finally, the bill would change the focus of existing law on a “loaded” gun into a ban on access to both a loaded and an **unloaded** gun. Reasonable limits on access to a loaded gun may make sense, as an untrained child might accidentally discharge a loaded gun. But to criminalize the possibility that a minor “could” access an **unloaded** gun makes no sense at all. An unloaded gun is no more dangerous than a brick and far less dangerous than a knife or a baseball bat or many other household items.

Therefore, please issue an unfavorable report on this bill.