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March 15, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SENATE BILL 676
OPPOSE**

Re: Senate Bill 676 – Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention 3 (Jaelynn’s Law)

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (“NSSF”), and our industry members located throughout the state of Maryland, I write today to express our opposition to Senate Bill 676 (“SB 676”). SB 676 would among other things, mandate how firearms are to be stored and would impose penalties on those found to have violated the law.

As the trade association for America’s firearms, ammunition, hunting, and recreational shooting sports industry, NSSF seeks to promote, protect, and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. We represent nearly 9,000 members which include federally licensed manufacturers, wholesale distributors and retailers of firearms, ammunition and related goods and accessories, as well as public and private shooting ranges, sportsmen’s clubs, and endemic media, including close to 100 businesses located in Maryland.

First and foremost, NSSF supports the legal and responsible use of firearms. There are many minors who are taught the safe and responsible handling of firearms at a young age, and this bill would prevent them from using firearms or even having access to firearms without parental supervision, unless they have a certificate of firearm and hunter safety issued by the Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”). Other firearm safety training options exist outside of the curriculum being taught by DNR and those should be considered for inclusion in SB 676.

Additionally, there are times when a minor would need access to firearms and not just long guns such as rifles and shotguns, but even handguns. As drafted, SB 676 would prohibit a minor from using a firearm for self-defense unless there is someone older than 18 years old supervising them during their use of the firearm.

As for the “Youth Suicide Prevention and Firearm Safe Storage” portion of the bill, we would like to highlight several programs currently being spearheaded by the firearm industry. For decades, our REAL SOLUTIONS. SAFER COMMUNITIES.® initiatives have been creating safer communities by promoting firearm safety, responsible firearm use, and safe firearm storage

among lawful gun owners. We also have been working to reduce firearm accidents and reduce criminal access to and misuse of firearms.

As an industry we take seriously our responsibility to promote responsible actions among legal gun owners, to help prevent accidents, and to help keep guns out of the wrong hands. All of those actions make our homes, neighborhoods, and communities safer.

For more than 50 years, NSSF has encouraged gun owners to safely handle and securely store firearms, and over the last few decades, we have provided valuable resources and free firearm safety kits, including cable-style gun locks through the Project ChildSafe® program, to help prevent firearms accidents, thefts and misuse, including suicide. While we oppose mandatory storage requirements for law-abiding gun owners, recognizing that each person's living situation may be different, we do acknowledge that promoting true firearm safety and education programs is key to preventing accidents.

In addition to Project ChildSafe, the firearm industry and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention developed a suicide prevention toolkit to help firearms retailers, shooting range operators and customers understand risk factors and warning signs related to suicide, know where to find help and encourage secure firearms storage options. AFSP and the firearm industry have also partnered with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on a safe firearm storage toolkit designed to help prevent suicide among veterans.

For more information on our REAL SOLUTIONS initiative, please visit nssfrealolutions.org.

We share the concerns of all Americans, and we are proud of our history of leadership in creating real solutions. We are taking action, and the firearm industry has developed genuine solutions that protect our communities while respecting the legal rights of gun owners. However, we oppose mandates on how law-abiding gun owners should storage their firearms. It is for these reasons the National Shooting Sports Foundation opposes Senate Bill 676 and we would respectfully request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. W. Santos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "S".

Trevor W. Santos