

Resolution to support and call for the immediate passage of
HR748, Ethan's Law

Sponsored by Paul Friedman, Boyd Walker, Ben Dawes, and Sean Casey

Whereas, HR748, Ethan's Law, requires the safe storage of firearms.

Whereas, the bill establishes a framework to regulate the storage of firearms on residential premises at the federal, state, and tribal levels; at the federal level, the bill establishes statutory requirements for firearms on residential premises to be safely stored if a minor is likely to gain access without permission or if a resident is ineligible to possess a firearm; an individual who violates the requirements is subject to criminal penalties; a firearm stored in violation of the requirements is subject to seizure and forfeiture; and at the state and tribal levels, the bill requires the Department of Justice to award grants to implement functionally identical requirements for the safe storage of firearms;

Whereas, Democratic Rep. Don Beyer (VA-8) is one of the 190 Co-Sponsors of the bill;

Whereas, Congress has found the following: an estimated 4,600,000 minors in the United States live in homes with at least 1 unsecured firearm; 73 percent of children under the age of 10 living in homes with firearms reported knowing the location of their parents' firearms; 36 percent of those children reported handling their parents' unsecured firearms; the presence of unsecured firearms in the home increases the risk of unintentional and intentional shootings; over 75 percent of firearms used in youth suicide attempts and unintentional firearm injuries were stored in the residence of the victim, a relative, or a friend; the United States Secret Service and the Department of Education report that in 65 percent of deadly school shootings the attacker obtained the firearm from his or her own home or that of a relative; in the last decade, nearly 2,000,000 firearms have been reported stolen; in 2016 alone, 238,000 firearms were reported stolen in the United States; Between 2010 and 2016, police recovered more than 23,000 stolen firearms across jurisdictions that were used to commit kidnappings, armed robberies, sexual assaults, murders, and other violent crimes; higher levels of neighborhood gun violence drive depopulation, discourages commercial activity, and decreases property values, resulting in fewer business establishments, fewer jobs, lower home values, and lower home ownership rates;

Whereas, no parent should lose a child due to unsecured guns. The pain of losing a child to gun violence is unimaginable;

Be it therefore resolved that the ADC calls for the immediate passage of HR74, Ethan's Law, and urges every member to contact Rep. Don Beyer at colleen@friendsofdonbeyer.com to thank him for his support.

Background

The national #KeepKidsSafe coalition has made the following statement:

"Safe firearm storage practices are supported by 80% of Americans. Ethan's Law would give federal agencies an opportunity to dramatically shift attitudes towards firearm safety and prevent many parents from losing their children to school shootings, unintentional shootings, gun suicides, and interpersonal violence in communities of color. Currently, the federal government has failed to protect our children from preventable gun violence.

"Firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children. During the last two years, more children have died from gun violence than COVID19. According to the Gun Violence Archive, over 2800 children from age 0-17 have been killed by guns from January 1, 2020 to December 1, 2021. Meanwhile, 740 children have died of COVID-19 during the same period.

"On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, a 15-year-old student used an unsecured semiautomatic handgun and high-capacity magazines to kill four students and injure seven others at Oxford High School in a Detroit suburb in Michigan. Currently, the families of the victims, the entire student body, school faculty, neighbors, first responders, faith leaders, and the entire community are shocked, heartbroken, and many will suffer from PTSD. Millions of local, state, and federal dollars will be spent on healing and recovery.

"All forms of gun violence are killing, injuring, and traumatizing our children in all our communities. Each day in America, eight children are killed by guns and another 32 are shot and injured. School Shootings: According to the Education Week tracker, there have been 29 school shootings this year, 21 since August, when students returned to schools from the pandemic lockdown. The Oxford High School shooting was the deadliest school shooting since May 2018.

“A CNN analysis published in 2018 found that, since 2009, the United States had about 57 times as many school shootings as Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom combined. A Washington Post analysis showed more than four million children endured traumatizing lockdown drills in 2018. According to the 2019 Department of Homeland Security U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence, three-quarters of school shooters acquired the firearm from the home of a parent or close relative; guns were easily accessible or unsecured; and three-quarters of school attackers (77%) had a history of using weapons before the attack.

“There is a misconception that school shootings only happen in suburban communities. Approximately 34% of the attacks occur in schools located in suburban communities, 24% in rural schools, and 27% in urban schools.

“Unintentional Shootings: According to Everytown for Gun Safety’s analysis, over 5.4 million children live in homes with unsecured guns and there were at least 2,070 unintentional shootings by children under 18 years old between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2020, resulting in 765 deaths and 1,366 injuries.

“Gun Suicides: An NIVISS study of firearm suicides among youths ages 17 and under for a two-year period in four states and two counties found that 82% used a firearm belonging to a family member, usually a parent, and about two-thirds of the firearms had been stored unlocked. In 2018, nearly 2,400 children aged 5-18 died by suicide in the United States, making suicide the second leading cause of death in this age group. U.S. suicide rates among children have increased by over 80% over the past decade and of those deaths, about 40% involved firearms.

“Interpersonal Violence: Black children and teens are 14 times more likely than white children and teens of the same age to die by gun homicide. According to the Center for American Progress analysis, from 2012 to 2015, nearly half a billion dollars’ worth of guns were stolen from individuals nationwide, amounting to an estimated 1.2 million guns and 22,000 guns were stolen from gun stores during this same period. Sadly, a gun is stolen in the U.S. every two minutes. In addition, stolen weapons fuel illegal gun possession by children in communities of color and contribute to the high rate of gun violence. There are nearly 400 million civilian-owned guns in America. Thirty four percent of children in the United States (representing more than 22 million children in 11 million homes) live in homes with at least one firearm.

“Under federal law, children under the age of 18 may not legally possess a handgun, except in limited circumstances, but Federal law does not restrict the age of individuals who may possess long guns. American children from urban, suburban, and rural communities are acquiring unsecured and/or illegal guns and killing and injuring others or themselves at an alarming rate. It’s time for the federal government to step in to protect our children.”