



The League of Women Voters of Delaware Urges Release of HB 366 Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms

presented at a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee on April 25, 2018

The League of Women Voters of Delaware urges the House Judiciary Committee to release HB 366 and to work for its speedy enactment.

We are pleased to note that it appears that the League of Women Voters shares support for the safe storage of firearms with the National Rifle Association. According to their website:

“When using or storing a gun, always follow these additional NRA rules:

...Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.”¹

Unfortunately, the National Crime Prevent Council (NCPC) reports that

“1.4 million homes have firearms stored in a way that makes them most accessible to about 2.6 million children.”²

As the Giffords Law Center points out:

“These laws (e.g. HB 366) are necessary to shape responsible storage practices, prevent firearm theft, and reduce firearm suicides, accidents, and homicides by children and unauthorized users.

“When minors have unsupervised access to operable firearms, tragedies result far too often. Minors living in homes with unsecured guns are at especially high risk of suicide and accidental firearm injury. Between 2004 and 2014, over 6,000 minors intentionally shot themselves. The clear majority of them used guns owned by someone in their home.

“Every year, firearms also cause thousands of unintentional deaths and injuries. Recent research on unintentional shootings has found that such accidents “occurred roughly twice as often as the records indicate, because of idiosyncrasies in how such deaths are classified by the authorities.” Even these lower reported numbers indicate that **from 2005 to 2014, roughly 20,000 American minors were killed or seriously injured in accidental shootings; the majority of those killed were aged 12 or younger.**

“Too often, minors have also used their families’ unsecured firearms to intentionally perpetrate violence against others. In the three years after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, there were at least 84 school shootings in K-12 schools in the US. The majority of these shootings were perpetrated by minors... **in 65% of school shootings covered by the study, the shooter used a gun obtained from his or her own home or from the home of a relative.** ³

The NCPC notes that: “Responsible firearms owners use their firearms safely and understand the need to prevent their firearms from getting into the wrong hands. They also know that firearm safety should be a priority if we want to better protect our children, prevent avoidable injury, and keep our communities safe.”⁴

Unfortunately, HB 366 is urgently needed to address those who ignore the need for safe storage of their firearms. We urge release of this legislation.

¹ <https://gunsafetyrules.nra.org>

² <https://www.safefirearmsstorage.org/> This web site is funded in whole or in part through a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs. U.S. Department of Justice.

³ See <http://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/child-consumer-safety/safe-storage/> for footnotes on studies quoted.

⁴ <https://www.safefirearmsstorage.org/>