

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE OF UTAH

REPRESENTATIVE  
ELIZABETH WEIGHT  
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SALT LAKE COUNTY



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July 18, 2018

To: Representative Lee Perry, Senator Don Ipson, Co-Chairs, and members of the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee

Regarding: Safe Storage of Firearms Amendments

I appreciate your time to hear and discuss this item today.

As a teacher, my instruction always had to consider the elements and experiences in my students' lives – everything from what they ate for breakfast to what may have happened on the way to school, what just occurred in the hallway or whether a grandparent in the hospital was recovering. During the thirty-two years I taught school, I watched gun violence become a more and more common element for my kids to live with. In conversations, more and more of my students might describe an incident of gun injury or death in their neighborhood. More and more frequently, I became part of the school-wide counseling team when a student in the school, someone we all saw every day, was lost to suicide from a gunshot. With every school shooting, I have witnessed my students incorporating the potential of gun violence in their school days. When I hear any students talk about gun incidents in their lives, I see my students' faces.

We know that most of the guns that kids have access to come from their homes. We also know, from gun enthusiasts themselves, that responsible gun owners secure their firearms when they are not in use. These owners have provided the standards for safe and responsible gun storage.

The legislation I propose is to acknowledge owners who store guns safely and to codify safe storage practices they have established. It would also uphold and encourage the efforts of gun dealers to inform buyers about and promote safe gun storage.

The legislation would:

- Require that firearms be stored in a certain manner;
- Require that firearm dealers provide information that describes firearm storage requirements; and
- Provide a penalty for failure to store firearms.

Safe gun storage is a recommendation in the June, 2018, Report from the Utah Safe Schools Commission. With guidelines for storage from gun-owners and professionals whose jobs involve the trained use of guns, we can reinforce responsible ownership that will save lives in Utah.

I will appreciate your ideas and observations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth".