

Secure Firearm Storage

Holding gun owners accountable for the secure storage of their firearms is a public safety policy that will minimally impact gun owners and will encourage responsible behavior.

HB7373 – Sponsored by Representatives Caldwell, Knight, Fellela, Batista, Boylan, Kazarian, Fogarty, Stewart, McEntee, Handy, **29 total sponsors**

SB2202 – Sponsored by Senators Lauria, Pearson, Lawson, Gallo, Euer, DiMario, Miller, Felag, DiPalma, Cano, **28 total sponsors**

What would these bills do?

- Require all firearms to be securely stored any-time they are not being used or carried by their owner
- Updated bill includes **all firearms (loaded or unloaded) that children under age 18 can access**. Currently, Rhode Island law addresses only **loaded** firearms that **children under 16** can access.
- Require licensed firearms dealers to display a warning about the risks of firearm access and to disseminate information to gun purchasers about secure storage, suicide prevention and RI's gun safety laws.

Strong public support

74.8%
of Rhode Islanders
support holding owners
liable when their guns are
used in crimes

Source: 2020 poll conducted by Center for Research & Public Policy for RICAGV

The accessibility of firearms and risk for suicide and homicide victimization among household members

"Firearms that are stored loaded or unlocked are more likely to be used than those that are unloaded or locked, and **adolescent suicide victims often use an unlocked firearm in the home.**"

Source: Annals of Internal Medicine, "The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members," doi: 10.7326/M13-1301

American Academy of Pediatrics statement

"Firearms should be removed from the environments where children live and play, but if they are not, they must be stored locked and unloaded. Safe storage practices can reduce the risk of death or injury, but **loaded firearms and unloaded firearms and ammunition represent a serious danger to children.**"

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Statement on Safe Storage of Firearms

Most guns come from family member

- The US Secret Service conducted 2 studies over 40 years, determining that almost 75% of school shooters acquired their firearms from the home of a parent or close relative.

Source: Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence

- In January 2023, a 6-year-old in Virginia intentionally shot his first-grade teacher using his mother's 9mm handgun.

Suicide and life-threatening behavior

"More than 80% of child deaths by gun suicide involve a gun belonging to a family member."

Source: "Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides?" PMID: 21198329

Knowledge of and access to family firearms

Three out of four children, even those younger than 10, with guns at home **know the location of their parent's gun** in the home. One-third of these children **admitted to handling the gun unsupervised**.

Source: Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, "Parental misperceptions about children and firearms," PMID: 16651499

Whose guns are stolen?

"We estimate that there are approximately 250,000 gun theft incidents per year. We find that certain types of gun owners—who own many guns, who carry guns, and who do not store guns safely—are at higher risk to have their guns stolen."

Source: Injury Epidemiology, "Whose guns are stolen? The epidemiology of gun theft victims," doi:10.1186/s40621-017-0109-8.

Close calls in Rhode Island

- February 2022 - **A Burrillville man terrorized neighbors for months with repeated "shots fired" incidents**. At his arrest, police seized 211 firearms from all over the home where he lived with his wife and **10-year-old and twin 5-year-old children**. "Pounds and pounds" of ammunition were also confiscated.

Source: The Providence Journal, Feb. 26, 2022

- January 2021 - A Westerly man was arrested on various charges, including simple assault, domestic disorderly, resisting arrest, and neglect of a child, but **no charges for the loaded AR-15 found under his sleeping child's bed**. The firearm was owned legally.

Source: The Westerly Sun, Jan. 12, 2021

Safe firearm storage may have prevented these Rhode Island tragedies

- February 2022 - A Johnston man was charged with four misdemeanors of **violating state law on the safe storage of firearms in the accidental shooting death of a local 16-year-old**. The guns were owned legally, but the owner was not home when the incident occurred.

"I believe [that] if the gun had been secured it would have prevented my sister from acting impulsively. It would have bought some time and sometimes, when you can interrupt a suicide...you can save a life."

- Patti Alley, Warwick, RI, remembering Allyson Dosreis

"From 2014 to 2018, 208 Rhode Islanders died as a result of firearms. Of these tragic deaths, 70% were due to suicide or intentional self-harm. Each of these deaths was preventable and all were tragic. The one common denominator was access to a firearm."

- Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Former Director, RI Dept. of Health

Gun-related incidents in Rhode Island from 2017-2021 among children and youth (ages 1 to 19)

184
Emergency room visits
20
Hospitalizations for injuries
11
Deaths

Source: 2023 RI Kids Count Factbook