

Re: In favor of Bill 7373 Safe Storage of firearms

Chair Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee.

I am writing to encourage your positive action on the Safe Storage Bill 3373.

I have lived in Rhode Island for 50 years and during a great deal of that time I have practiced Psychiatry. At times work has brought me into contact with the sorrow and pain caused by the impulsive use of a firearm. The severity of this pain and the subsequent effect as it spreads through the family unit and the community is enormous. Lives are changed forever, families destroyed, and long-term productivity lost.

Much of this could have been prevented and can be prevented in the future. Data shows that when these sad events involve children or adolescents the firearm is obtained from a parent or other relative and that the weapon was available to the child in an unsecure location as was the case with the six-year-old Virginia boy who shot his first-grade teacher.

It is also well known that many "crimes of passion" such as suicide would have been prevented by a moment of delay allowing for reflection.

Senators, the great majority of Rhode Island residents support this legislation. The bill harms no one and has the potential to prevent incalculable tragedy. This bill has been introduced before and legislative responsibility avoided by the ruse of "held for study". I urge you to make this the year the House will act by representing the wishes of the majority of voters in this state and move the Secure Storage bill out of committee on to the floor for a vote.

I am pleased to note that my representative Mathew Dawson (copied on this testimony) is a cosponsor of this important and lifesaving Bill

Sincerely,

Robert Westlake, MD
East Providence, RI