

Dear Members of the Committee,

I strongly support H5443.

My mother, Donna, recently shot herself in the head at our favorite park. She had purchased that handgun just minutes before. She did not want to die and she did not want to shoot herself. She wanted to live and play with her grandchildren. But her bipolar disorder caused her to sometimes be suicidal. She was aware of this and frightened by her dangerous mental state. She immediately took proactive steps to protect herself from suicide every way she legally could. She went to her doctors and psychiatrist regularly and maintained daily contact with them to prevent suicide. She voluntarily committed herself to inpatient psychiatric care multiple times in a row. My step dad quit his job to watch over her. She tried everything she could to NOT kill herself. Despite the best psychiatric care, my mom 's time in inpatient hospital programs would expire. We tried to protect her every way we could. My family called the police five times that day to prevent her suicide.

In a psychotic episode, Mom impulsively Googled gun stores on her iphone. She drove to the closest gun store and bought her first gun. She shot herself moments later at the park. My mom would have signed up for this list because she definitely did not want to die.

HAD she been INvoluntarily committed to the psychiatric hospital she would have been protected from an impulsive gun purchase. But because she took the initiative to voluntarily commit herself to a psychiatric hospital she was not permitted to use the same tools of self defense against suicide. A voluntary prohibition to purchase a gun would have saved her life. This will save others from impulsive gun suicide.

This simple tool will protect the precious lives that desperately want to live.

Thank you.

Karina Nathan