



April 2025

T

O: Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

RE: HB25-1250 -- Gun Violence Prevention & Parents of Students

Dear Committee Members:

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. More than 700 community leaders are members of AAUW branches around Colorado.

AAUW has declared that gun violence is a public health crisis. Mass shootings have become commonplace, and our children now live with the expectation that they may be the next victims. HB1250 seeks to inform students and parents about gun violence prevention by requiring posting of information on school websites and in printed materials.

We believe HB1250 represents a small, but important, step toward making Coloradans safer from gun violence.

AAUW of Colorado strongly supports SB003 and requests your AYE vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming a law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden".

Su Ryden
AAUW of Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

16699 E. Kentucky Ave. • Aurora, CO 80017
303.898.5797
suryden25@gmail.com

American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

I was born and raised in Chicago and one of its northwest suburbs. Despite strict gun control measures in the Chicago metro area and Illinois at large, I unfortunately remember hearing regularly about shootings while I was growing up. In school, we were conditioned to fear gang activity and gun violence. For years, I thought that guns were the problem because we were really never exposed to any opinions or evidence to the contrary. As a child, I never imagined that someday I'd be a gun owner, let alone an advocate for Second Amendment rights. And yet, here I am: a responsible gun owner who believes in citizens' inherent right to defend themselves and their families. When I purchased a gun, I felt empowered. I felt like I had an invaluable tool for protecting not just myself, but my family. That includes my children. I didn't have to feel afraid, because I knew that if someone came onto my property with the intent to hurt or possibly kill me and my family, I'd have a means of fighting back. As responsible gun owners, neither my husband nor I have any intention to cause harm to anyone, and we hope to God that we never have to use our weapons to defend our family. But we deserve to have the option — and frankly, we have the moral obligation — to protect our family if we so choose. These are lessons we are teaching our children. We want them to grow up to be responsible gun owners themselves and to understand the obligations that go with exercising one's Second Amendment rights. And there is nothing immoral or dangerous about that.

Using schools to demonize responsible gun owners will not make our kids any safer. It will teach them to live in fear. I know from my own experience how that feels and how psychologically damaging that can be. Teaching children that responsible gun owners tend toward violence is also dishonest and will ultimately teach them that criminals hold all the power (which could actually encourage emotionally disturbed children to seek out dangerous and ILLEGAL means of obtaining guns and other weapons with the intent to cause harm, something we have sadly witnessed around the country on too many occasions over the past few decades). We should be encouraging our kids to grow into responsible adults; vilifying responsible adults will severely undermine that goal. Perhaps you'll recall examples of school shootings which were far more deadly because a responsible adult with a gun did NOT step up to defend students from a violent criminal. Perhaps you'll also recall examples of shootings which could have been much worse had it not been for a responsible gun owner who DID step up to protect potential victims. I'm not even suggesting that schools adopt pro-gun messages, either. But if you're going to push anti-gun messages in schools without exposing children to the other side of the argument, you're not serious about educating children at all; your goal is purely anti-gun indoctrination. And, as with other forms of indoctrination, that actively undermines parents, who are ultimately responsible for instilling morals and virtues into their children. I disagree with the notion that the Second Amendment is a threat to citizens' wellbeing, but I would never demand that the government or school system use its position to undermine parents who disagree with me. I oppose indoctrination in all its forms, as every parent should. It is not schools' — or the government's, for that matter — role to parent children. Schools are there to promote academic development and critical thinking, not to tell them what to believe. And certainly not to terrify them.

As both a responsible gun owner and a loving parent, I am asking you to do right by our children and their families. Don't encourage our children to live in fear or question their gun-owning parents' love for them. Please reject HB 1250. Thank you for your time.

I am a member of Students Demand Action and a student at East High School. Gun violence and its prevention is of particular importance to me because I have seen the way it can hurt people, schools and a community. I also know that my experience is in no way unique; gun violence is an epidemic plaguing the United States. My brother was present during the 2023 East High School shooting and my cousin is a current Florida State University student. These tragic events remind me that gun violence tangles youths together in a web that we cannot ignore. It is with those sentiments in mind that I want to share why I believe that the Gun Violence Prevention & Parents of students bill is important.

The CDC estimates that between 2003-2021 unlocked, loaded guns accounted for 70% of unintentional shootings involving children in the United States. Young children are at a particular risk in unintentional firearms accidents. While it is true Colorado has laws mandating the secure storage of firearms in certain instances, it is very difficult to enforce until an accident has already occurred. Normalizing these conversations and providing easy access to prevention facts and resources could prevent that tragedy before it happens.

Additionally, most school shooters take guns from their parents. Just a week ago at Florida State University the shooter obtained their weapon from a parent.

Furthermore, the bill proposed by the Gun Violence prevention committee falls in line with practices in public schools that promote health and safety. These include screenings for vision, hearing, hunger, mental health and fire safety. Ensuring equal access to information about gun safety and gun violence prevention for parents, guardians, families and students is vital to the safety and wellbeing of all children.

This bill, if passed, would be a step towards a future where children do not have to feel afraid to go to school or worry that they will be the victim of random gun violence on the street. Empowering guardians with knowledge on how to protect themselves and others can keep us alive.

Thank you council members for taking the time to read my testimony.

Gun Control Research- Dr. Gary Kleck- Gun most effective way to resist robbery and assault- up to 2.5 million defensive gun uses per year by U.S. adults

Dr. Kleck, a professor of criminology at Florida State University is a registered Democrat, a member of the ACLU, does not own guns, and takes no money from anyone on either side in the debate. In 1988, Kleck published an article in the journal, *Social Relations*. This article, the first major research effort that measured defensive gun use, was based on state and national studies.

Dr. Kleck estimated that about 1 million adults per year use a gun for self-defense in the U.S. Kleck's research included studies done for the anti-gun National Alliance Against Violence, and the National Crime Victimization Surveys. Kleck concluded that gun use was the most effective and safest way of resisting a robbery or assault, safer than not resisting, running away, or using another method of resistance.

In 1991, Dr. Kleck published *Point Blank: guns and violence in America*. The book won an award in 1993 from the American Society of Criminology for an "outstanding contribution" to the field.

Not satisfied with the sources for his previous work, Dr. Kleck and his colleague Marc Gertz created a new survey with a sample size of about 5,000 individuals to better measure defensive gun use. With the new survey, Kleck and Gertz estimated between 2.2 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses per year in the U.S. Women were the defenders in about 46% of the cases reported. Less than 25% of the reporting defensive users indicated that they fired a shot during the incident under consideration. There is a less than 1% chance that a defender's gun will be taken from him or her by an assailant, according to Dr. Kleck.

Dr. Marvin Wolfgang was asked to critique the Kleck/Gertz Study. Dr. Wolfgang's review included the following: "I am as strong a gun-control advocate as can be found among... criminologists... they (Kleck and Gertz) have provided an almost clear-cut case of methodologically sound research in support of something I have theoretically opposed for years... the use of a gun in defense against a criminal perpetrator... I do not like their conclusions that having a gun can be useful, but I cannot fault their methodology."

The absolute lowest estimates of about 100,000 defensive gun uses per year in this country come from the Department of Justice, using U.S. Census information. There is no question in the survey that asks about defensive firearms' use. This estimate is probably a serious undercount.

The Clinton Justice Department funded what was supposed to be a counter study debunking the Kleck/Gertz research. In 1996, anti-gun researchers Ludwig and Cook came up with about 3 million defensive gun uses per year. They then decided that it is impossible to measure the true number of persons who use guns in America for self-defense.

The research done by Kleck and Gertz indicates that defensive use of firearms by private citizens is a significant factor in stopping criminal violence. The research also lends itself to the conclusion that in most cases where a gun is used to resist robbery or assault, no shots are fired.

Sources:

- ❑ Blackman, Paul H., Ph.D., "Armed Citizens and Crime Control," <http://www.nraila.org/issues/articles/read.aspx?id=125>.
- ❑ Kopel, David, Independence Institute, panel discussion on guns and self-defense, Warwick Hotel, Denver, Colorado, July, 2009. <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&VideoID=60107462>
- ❑ "How Often Are Firearms Used in Self-Defense?" http://www.guncite.com/gun_control_gcdguse.html.
- ❑ Stevens, Richard W., "Statistics and 'Gun Control,'" Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, Inc, <http://www.jpfo.org/filegen-a-m/data-docs.htm>.

Firearms Coalition of Colorado, PO Box 1454, Englewood, CO 80150-1454

Gun Control Research-Wright and Rossi Department of Justice Study
(Deterrent effect of armed citizens upon criminal behavior)

Professors James D. Wright and Peter Rossi of the Social and Demographic Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts conducted a study in 1982 and 1983 paid for by the U.S. Department of Justice. (Professor Rossi was a former President of the American Sociological Association.) The researchers interviewed 1,874 imprisoned felons in ten states.

Professors Wright and Rossi initially believed that strict gun control deterred crime. The results of their research led them to the conclusion that armed citizens have a beneficial effect in reducing criminal behavior and that harsh laws, such as handgun bans, could result in criminals using sawed off rifles and shotguns with more deadly results. 88% of the criminals surveyed by Wright and Rossi agreed with the statement that, "A criminal who wants a handgun is going to get one."

A 1986 review of the professors' work, *Armed and Considered Dangerous*, by Raymond G. Kessler of the Department of Criminal Justice of Memphis State University, concluded, "Although *Armed and Considered Dangerous* is not free of methodological problems, it is the best policy-oriented study of criminals and their guns available."

Wright and Rossi reported that:

81% of interviewees agreed that a "smart criminal" will try to determine if a potential victim is armed.

74% indicated that burglars avoided occupied dwellings, because of fear of being shot.

57% said that most criminals feared armed citizens more than the police.

40% of the felons said that they had been deterred from committing a particular crime, because they believed that the potential victim was armed.

57% of the felons who had used guns themselves said that they had encountered potential victims who were armed.

34% of the criminal respondents said that they had been scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed citizen.

Based on this government-funded research by Wright and Rossi, it would appear that armed citizens do have a deterrent effect on crime.

Wright, James D., Rossi, Peter H., Daly, Kathleen, *Under the Gun, Weapons, Crime, and Violence in America*, Aldine de Gruyter, New York, 1983.

Wright, James D., Rossi, Peter H., *The Armed Criminal in America*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

Wright, James D., Rossi, Peter H., *Armed and Considered Dangerous, a Survey of Felons and their Firearms*, Aldine de Gruyter, New York, 1986.

Firearms Coalition of Colorado, PO Box 1454 Englewood, CO 80150-1454

Testimony in opposition to: HB25-1250, Gun Violence Prevention & Parents of Students

The Firearms Coalition of Colorado
PO Box 1454, Englewood, CO 80150-1454

Thank you, Chair and Committee

My name is Robert Edmiston. I am with the Firearms Coalition of Colorado an NRA-affiliated, all-volunteer, grassroots organization dedicated to the protection of individual rights and public safety.

I am a former U.S. Army Officer and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. I have a Master's Degree in Psychology, Counseling and Guidance.

I am writing in opposition to the measure under consideration. Based on testimony from many young people on many bills in committee, we believe that Colorado students are experiencing mental health issues resembling anxiety disorder or paranoia. We have heard tearful stories of students fearful of going to school, because of the perceived threat of a mass shooting.

Since the state has refused to take positive action to stop school shootings by posting armed guards at the institutions, we believe it is not helpful put forth additional government "information." We believe this additional emphasis on "gun violence" will contribute to the fear and anxiety that seem to be endemic in the school population.

In an apparent attempt to save money for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, the legislation requires school districts and other affected entities to download the information from the Office Website. The affected entities are then to post the information on their websites and forward information to all parents with children served by the entities. We believe this is an unfunded mandate for the affected institutions.

On the Website, the Office of Gun Violence (OGVP) encourages unqualified people to make judgements regarding the mental health of an individual who might be a danger to self or others by filing an Extreme Risk Protection Order. (ERPO) ERPOs create a situation where armed police officers are dispatched to confront an individual who they have been told is mentally unstable and a potential danger to them. In Maryland, a Black Man, Gary Willis, was killed by police when he was "red flagged" by a relative for comments made during a holiday dinner.

We have heard over and over in committee after committee that young persons' brains are not developed until the age of 25. Do we want people with undeveloped brains to be encouraged to take actions that will potentially put innocent others at risk?

The Website encourages students and parents to have conversations with friends, family, and neighbors about the dangers of gun ownership. It seems as if the office is encouraging student and parent activism against the ownership of firearms.

The OGVP Website links to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Website for violence prevention strategies. The following is an excerpt from the CDC Site regarding “upstream” gun violence prevention measures.

[“About Violence Prevention | Violence Prevention | CDC”](#). The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. Other large societal factors include the health, economic, educational, and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society. Prevention strategies at this level include efforts to promote societal norms that protect against violence as well as efforts to strengthen household financial security, education and employment opportunities, and other policies that affect the structural determinants of health.”

We are concerned that the “societal norms” promoted by the CDC and the OGVP include the progressive demonization of guns and gun owners, disregarding the positive effects that firearms have in the deterrence and prevention of crime. (Please see attached files with research by Wright and Rossi and Gary Kleck.)

We believe this bill threatens to degrade student mental health, indoctrinate students against firearms ownership, and further divide families and neighbors.

We urge a “No” vote on this bill.

Thank you.

Robert Edmiston
Volunteer Lobbyist
The Firearms Coalition of Colorado
PO Box 1454, Englewood, CO 80150-1454

This Bill proposes to place, as of yet, unspecified, politicized, propaganda, in the hands of every student and their families to support your political bias. Personally I try to see both sides of an argument before making a judgement. Suppose the Republicans had absolute power over the judiciary as you do now. Would you want them to place propaganda in front of your kids at school on subjects like abortion for example, or "fill in the blank." Of course you wouldn't.

Partizan politics has gotten out of control, and I believe it is a major factor in all of the frustration, hate, anger, and the feeling of helplessness in society. Both sides are guilty of this partizan smugness and in thinking they are so "Right." I know I am not right all of the time and neither are you.

You think guns are the problem, but guns have been around for hundreds of years. It is only recently that people have started carrying out these mass killings. There has to be a lot of anger and hate to want kill someone, let alone as many people as you can with a gun, or a knife, or a truck full of fertilizer, or a pickup truck.

I think any propaganda you distribute to people about how bad guns are will have no effect on the evil doers and may actually fan the flames of those so inclined. As a physician I can tell you that smoking is bad for you, and we have given that message to students, but yet young people are still smoking.

While this bill is well intentioned, I think it leads us down a slippery slope on a subject that is hotly debated. Let's leave propaganda out of our schools and let them teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with some history and science. Perhaps we could even teach them how to control their anger and vent their frustration in non violent ways, and how to discuss issues with people they disagree with.

Thank you

Testimony in Support of SB 25-1250 with a Call for Strengthening Measures

Good afternoon/evening, Members of the Committee. My name is **Marcella Schieffelin**. I live in Mesa County and speak on my own behalf. I support SB 25-1250 because firearm safety is a critical issue affecting every community in Colorado. This bill is an essential first step in ensuring families have access to educational materials about safe firearm storage.

However, **education alone is not enough**. Research shows that simply providing information does not always lead to behavior change. According to the **Harvard School of Public Health**, **only 30% of gun owners who receive safety education store their firearms safely**. Compare that to the **60% of owners who implement safe storage when reinforced by laws and behavioral nudges**. We've seen this play out in other public safety efforts, like early child car seat campaigns, where initial awareness efforts had limited success until **enforcement and accountability measures** were added.

In Colorado, 76% of firearm deaths are suicides, and research indicates that secure storage **reduces the risk of suicide and unintentional shootings by up to 85%**. But simply handing out educational materials won't get us there.

That's why I strongly urge this committee to **consider future improvements** to SB 25-1250, including:

- ✓ **Community engagement** to reinforce safe storage through trusted voices like doctors, teachers, and firearm owners.
- ✓ **Behavioral nudges** such as text reminders and safe storage incentive programs have been proven to increase compliance.
- ✓ **Peer reinforcement** and local partnerships to **make safe storage the norm**, not just a recommendation.

I support SB 25-1250 because it moves us in the right direction, but **we must do more** to make it effective. If we genuinely want to prevent **tragedies that are 100% preventable**, we must be willing to take the next step. I urge this committee to **pass SB 25-1250 today while committing to future improvements** that will ensure real, measurable change.

<https://hsph.harvard.edu/injury-control/news/firearm-training-is-not-associated-with-safe-firearm-storage-practices/>

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/solutions/safe-and-secure-gun-storage>

<https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/states/colorado/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15701912/>

<https://firearminjury.umich.edu/healthcare-safe-storage/>

<https://www.bradyunited.org/resources/issues/safe-storage>

TO: Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee
FROM: Morgaine Wilkins-Dean
Re: Support for HB25-1250 – Gun Violence Prevention & Parents of Students
DATE:

Dear Chair Mullica and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Morgaine Wilkins-Dean and I am a native Coloradan and 2024 graduate of East High School within Denver Public Schools. I am currently a freshman at California State University Sacramento studying Political Journalism. I am submitting the below testimony in strong support of HB25-1250 – Gun Violence Prevention & Parents of Students.

Like many students of my generation, I experienced active shooter drills throughout my school career and several instances of gun violence in high school including two shootings on campus where two students were killed and two staff members were shot and injured. Later that same year, my school also experienced a SWATting where law enforcement entered the school with rifles and students were told to evacuate with their hands above their heads. These incidents had significant impacts on me and my classmates including instances of PTSD, where school staff turned off the noise on the fire alarm because students were being triggered by the loud noise. As well as overall heightened anxiety in school for all students.

Research demonstrates that one of the most common ways youth access guns is through the home. For this reason, parents need to understand the importance of safe firearm storage, how to obtain low- or no-cost gun locks, and what actions are required to comply with Colorado's safe storage law. Reducing access to guns in the home would reduce access to guns by young people that could be used to commit acts of violence in their schools, in their communities, or against themselves.

During my junior and senior year of high school, I worked with the Denver Public Schools Board of Education to enact a policy requiring DPS Superintendents to regularly communicate the importance of safe gun storage and provide access to Colorado's Safe Storage law. Many lives could be saved if school districts throughout Colorado took similar actions to ensure parents understand that safe firearm storage is an easy way to prevent youth violence and make our schools safer.

HB25-1250 requires local education providers to distribute materials created by the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to caregivers at the beginning of each school year. By passing this bill, you can help educate parents on ways to keep guns out of the hands of youth and keep violence out of Colorado's schools. This important legislation does not cost the state any money and is a commonsense approach to saving lives.

I urge you to vote yes on this bill.

Thank you,

Morgaine Wilkins-Dean