



SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CLEARWATER COUNTY, MINNESOTA

SHERIFF DARIN HALVERSON

213 Main Avenue North
Bagley, MN 56621
(218) 694-6226

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Matt Bliss
311 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Bliss,

I am writing you with deep concern over some of the proposed gun bills traveling through the legislature, most concerning HF396, firearm and ammunition storage requirements. As a responsible gun owner, I feel that this proposed bill completely oversteps the state's authority in enacting a law and is extremely intrusive on individual rights. Responsible gun owner's do not need to be told by the government how to properly store a firearm.

If passed, this law would have little impact on the safety of individuals. It would have the opposite effect. Home owners would not be able to defend themselves in a case of a home invasion, where seconds could make the difference between life and death. We are now going to take the right of people to legally defend themselves?

In outstate Minnesota, almost every home has a firearm. How does the State think this law would be enforced? One would have to have a search warrant for every residence to ensure compliance with the law which would be a direct violation of the fourth amendment of the United States Constitution. As Sheriff, one of my responsibilities is to protect the citizens I serve against violations of their constitutional rights. This law would be a direct violation of those rights.

Minnesota currently has a law, Minnesota State Statute 609.666, that addresses the negligent storage of firearms. This law is sufficient to address cases where a child gains access to a loaded firearm. If the legislature feels that the penalty should be increased, then make that change. Otherwise, we do not need to make every law-abiding citizen a criminal for not locking up every gun they have. If areas in the state feel that stricter gun laws are needed, then let those areas make local ordinances. This should not be a one size fits all approach. As I have already said, responsible gun owners know how to secure their weapons, we do not need a law to tell us how.



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Every time there is a mass shooting in America, the knee jerk reaction is to make more gun laws. The simple fact is, we don't need more gun laws, we need to clean up what we have and have them align with federal law. In addition, we need to look at the real root of the problem and that is mental illness. No one wants to talk about this issue and the lack of available mental health facilities. Every person who commits an egregious act such as taking someone's life, is suffering from mental illness. A healthy, sane individual would not take another human life unprovoked. Let's start talking about this issue and putting money towards more mental health treatment facilities. Maybe we could stop some of these killings if we had addressed the true underlying issues. Let's address the real problem instead of making more gun laws. My constituents would not be in favor of this law and neither am I.

Thank you for what you do and thank you for taking the time to read my letter. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at 218-694-6226 or email me at dain.halverson@co.clearwater.mn.us.

Respectfully yours,

Darin Halverson
Clearwater County Sheriff