

In kindergarten I was taught how to stop, drop, and roll. My whole class took a field trip to the fire station- we toured the trucks, awed at the gear, and practiced those skills.

But even though those words were ingrained into my memory, they didn't mean a thing when my neighbors house burned down. In that instance, my safety came down to the actions of my parents.

My parents took on the responsibility of making sure I never had to interact with a fire. My mother carried me across the street and kept me calm as the fire truck sprayed down my neighbor's house. My father always made sure to disconnect the grill from the propane tank, and keep the lighters for my mom's candles out of our reach.

My name is Chloe Gayer. I am a student at Drake University, the Group Leader of Iowa's Students Demand Action chapter, and most importantly I am an Iowan. I have lived the last 19 years of my life in between the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. And in those last 19 years, I have watched as our lawmakers flaunt their allegiance to the gun lobby and ignore their duty to their constituents.

The bill we are discussing today would require the children in our public schools to endure a program developed by the National Rifle Association. A program that was deemed "ineffective" by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Each year, hundreds of children across America gain access to unsecured firearms and unintentionally harm themselves or someone else. And each year we hear story after story of children dying because of these preventable tragedies.

With an estimated [4.6 million American children living in homes with guns that are both loaded and unlocked](#), It doesn't matter how well you have taught children about gun safety and responsible gun ownership. At the end of the day children are curious, and, as Iowans it is our job to make sure that the curious children and vulnerable teens in our neighborhoods cannot get a hold of firearms.

[Since 2015, over a thousand lives were cut short by unintentional shootings by children. 11 of those lives were stolen right here in Iowa.](#)

But research shows that with effective solutions, these tragedies are preventable. That's why we have to focus on getting the word out about secure firearm storage. A study on storage practices showed that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers than those that locked neither.

On the other hand, multiple studies found [that young children who go through gun safety training, like that proposed here, are just as likely as children with no training to play with a handgun when they find one.](#)

My message today is simple: if you have a gun in the house, keep it unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition -- and encourage other people you know to do the same. I urge you to please vote NO on House File 73. We can all do our part to prevent more kids from gaining access to guns.