

Comment Report

HF 73

A bill for an act relating to firearm education in schools, including requiring the director of the department of education to develop and distribute age-appropriate model programs for firearm safety instruction and modifying provisions related to the required instruction in public schools and accredited nonpublic schools in grades six through twelve.

Subcommittee Members: Stone-CH, Holt, Madison

Date: 02/07/2023

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: RM 19

Name: A Friend

Comment: The Constitutional Watchmen Society of Iowa opposes the passage of this bill. Firearms education is a matter best left to parents to educate their children about, not the state (other than Hunter's safety courses). If we can't keep our schools & teachers from radicalizing kids in civics or history class, then we sure as hell don't need them potentially radicalizing them when it comes to firearms. Keeping the current Hunter's safety classes as they were would also make it easier to vet instructors instruct the class.

Name: Sandy Wilson

Comment: Citizen Engagement declares IN FAVOR of HF 73.

Name: Temple Hiatt

Comment: I am OPPOSED to HF 73, a bill that will require NRA propaganda in our schools. As a veteran, I understand gun safety and as a parent, I understand how curious kids are. It is always an adult's responsibility to prevent unauthorized access to guns, not a curious child's responsibility to avoid guns. If lawmakers were really interested in protecting our children, they would support programs like besmartforkids.org, which put the responsibility on parents to securely store firearms, not on children. Instead, lawmakers who are beholden to the gun lobby are promoting the National Rifle Association's Eddie Eagle program, which was deemed ineffective by the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14702451/>). Their allegiance should be to our children in Iowa schools, not faulty programs pushed by the NRA. Up to 80% of school shooters under age 18 get their guns from their homes or the homes of relatives or friends. In Iowa, 54% of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides. Promoting secure storage efforts won't line the pockets of the gun lobby, but it will save lives.

Name: Kari Tietjen

Comment: Lawmakers are boldly flaunting their allegiance to the gun lobby with HF73 a bill to require kids in public schools go through the National Rifle Association's Eddie Eagle program, which was deemed ineffective by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Their allegiance should be to our children in our Iowa schools, not faulty programs pushed by the NRA. The onus to keep guns out of reach should always be on adults we owe it to our kids to keep them safe. If lawmakers were really interested in protecting our children, they would support programs which put the responsibility on parents to securely store firearms, not on children. MOMs demand action has a better program, with a focus on safety, reducing guns in our community, and the importance of storage. Support this for adults.

Name: Susan Jacobi

Comment: I would like to comment in OPPOSITION to HF 73. We should be focusing our gun safety efforts on parents and other adult gun owners to promote safe storage and keep the firearms away from children in the first place. But HF 73 is placing the gun safety responsibility on our children instead. The American Academy of Pediatrics has deemed the NRAs Eddie Eagle program ineffective, and it is the wrong approach for the children of Iowa.

Name: Kelly Sheldon

Comment: This gun craze needs to stop. The 2nd ammendment is great, but when it was created it was considering muskets, not the guns we make legal and allow anyone and everyone to carry today. Life is beautiful and we need to protect that. Protect our kids. Protect our school. Do better.The onus to keep guns out of reach should always be on adults we owe it to our kids to keep them safe. If lawmakers were really interested in protecting our children, they would support programs which put the responsibility on parents to securely store firearms, not on children.Would love to see our Iowa lawmakers operate in the best interest of their communities and states rather than a political party or NRA lobbyist especially when it comes to guns.We can do better. Mom of 2 elementary students learning active shooter drills.

Name: Amy Bruner

Comment: It doesnt 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 parents it is our job to make sure that curious children and vulnerable teens cannot get a hold of firearms.The stakes of this issue cant be overstated. Too many childrens lives are cut short by unintentional shootings every year but research shows these tragedies are preventable. Thats why we should focus on getting the word out about secure firearm storage, and advocate for commonsense secure storage laws, and school board notifications.Its 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. We can all do our part to prevent more kids from gaining access to guns.Its more important than ever that parents, teachers, and students get the right information to prevent unintentional shootings, as well as school shootings, homicide and assaults, and selfharm. Up to 80% of school shooters under age 18 get their guns from their homes or the homes of relatives or friends.

Name: Rebecca Truszkowski

Comment: I'm writing in opposition to HF 73. The NRA's Eddie Eagle program puts the onus on children to avoid firearms, when it is always an adult's responsibility to ensure that children and teens do not gain access to them. Studies have shown that programs like this, which train children what to do after they find an unsecured firearm, are not effective. It doesnt 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 parents it is our job to make sure that curious children and vulnerable teens cannot get a hold of firearms. If lawmakers are looking to support gun safety education, they should look to programs which teach parents and adults the importance of securely storing firearms away from children. Or better yet, pass legislation to require individuals to store firearms unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition.

Name: Karen Greenleaf

Comment: I am opposed to HF73.The American Academy of Pediatrics has deemed the Eddie Eagle program ineffective.I believe in the Be Smart program as the responsibility is on the parents. Safe storage of guns is an adult responsibility.I do not believe that normalizing guns should be in the public schools.

Name: Vicki Cero

Comment: I am against bill HF 73. Gun safety is totally the responsibility of the parents. NOT the public or private school system. Thank you

Name: Lenore Holte

Comment: I am in opposition to HF73. Legislators who are trying to push this through just want to show their allegiance to the NRA. The Eddie Eagle program has been shown to be ineffective. The responsibility for gun safety belongs to parents and other adult gun owners, not children.

Name: Gina Hausknecht

Comment: I am opposed to HR 73. Legislation should focus on gun safety itself: give us laws that require gun owners to store their firearms safely (e.g. unloaded and secured) and let's work from the basis of evidence. Research on programs that tell children not to touch guns have been demonstrated to be ineffective. Studies of gun storage practices shows dramatic decreases in gun injury and death in households that lock guns and ammunition. Gun ownership should come with responsibility for those adults who choose to own guns and keep them in their homes. Programs in schools telling young children how to behave around guns without doing anything to hold their parents and guardians accountable for the availability of lethal weapons in their homes is a deferral of responsibility from parents to the schools. This bill looks cynical: a way for the legislature to declare its interest in child gun safety without doing anything to actually keep kids safe around guns.

Name: Liz O'Hara

Comment: I am opposed to HF 73, a bill that continues the pandering to the NRA by saddling educators with the implementation of an ineffective program that does nothing for children's safety. Protecting children from unintended discharge of firearms is the job of parents. This is a ridiculous waste of time.

Name: Sheila Geneser

Comment: I am writing in opposition to HF 73. I do not believe that putting the responsibility on children to protect themselves from guns is appropriate; this responsibility is SOLELY on adults. Further, I believe that the suggested Eddie Eagle program is purely propaganda created by the NRA, as this program has even been shown to be ineffective in teaching children gun safety.

Name: Lisa Wiebenga

Comment: I am opposed to HR 73. Ultimately gun responsibility is on parents; not schools.

Name: Ann Gronstal

Comment: I oppose passage of HF 73 for all of the reasons stated below in opposition to the bill. Gun safety is an adult responsibility. Ownership of a dangerous weapon requires ownership of responsibility for that weapons use or misuse. An unsecured weapon accident is not an accident. It is neglect.

Name: Anne Tabor

Comment: I oppose HR 73A piece of legislation that is not necessary using a program that has been shown to be ineffective. It is madness that the NRA is now pushing children into the gun culture. Instead we as parents should be standing for gun safety and common sense gun laws.

Name: Chloe Gayer

Comment: 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 neighbor's 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.

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