



ETHAN'S LAW

SAFE STORAGE SAVES LIVES

BACKGROUND: On January 19, 2018, Ethan Song, of Guilford, Connecticut celebrated his 15th birthday. Twelve days later, Ethan was killed when he was accidentally shot with an unsecured firearm in his neighbor's home. The firearm had been stored in Tupperware in a box in a closet alongside the ammunition and the keys to the gun lock.

[4.6 million children and teens](#) in the United States live in homes with at least one loaded and unlocked firearm. Many of them not only know exactly where those guns are kept, but have also handled them without their parents' knowledge. These firearms are used in firearm suicides, unintentional and accidental shootings, and school violence.

The data is clear: firearms and access to them pose a clear, present, and unique danger to children. In 2020, firearms became [the leading cause of death](#) for children in the United States. 30 percent of the deaths were determined to be suicides. In fact, every year, [700 children die by firearm suicide](#)—most often using guns belonging to a family member. Another 5 percent of firearm-related deaths among children in 2020 were unintentional or undetermined accidents. Each day, [eight children and teens are unintentionally injured or killed](#) due to an unlocked or unsupervised gun in the home. And, between 2008 and 2017, [76 percent of student attackers](#) acquired a firearm from the home of a parent or another close relative.

SAFE STORAGE: [Twenty-four states](#)—red, blue, and purple—already have some form of safe storage or child access prevention laws on the books. Evidence from these states shows that these laws work to [lower the risk of firearm suicide](#), [reduce the number of unintentional and accidental shootings](#), and [create safer school environments](#).

Even the firearms industry—including the National Rifle Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation—agrees that safe storage is a critical part of responsible gun ownership. The [NRA](#) recommends to gun owners that “[s]trong boxes and security cases . . . are inexpensive and give . . . quick access to . . . firearms in a defensive situation.” The [NSSF](#) tells gun owners to “[a]lways make absolutely sure that firearms in your home are securely stored out of the reach of children and other unauthorized persons.” In fact, [66-percent of gun owners](#) favor safe storage themselves.

ETHAN'S LAW: *Ethan's Law*—named for Ethan Song—would require that gun owners safely and securely store their firearms. More specifically, this legislation would:

- Prohibit any person from keeping any firearm unsecured on their premises if they should reasonably expect that a minor or resident who cannot lawfully possess a firearm may gain access to that firearm. If a person stores their firearm using a secure safety device, within a secure location, then the firearm would be considered safely and securely stored.
- Establish a \$500 fine for each instance in which an individual fails to securely store firearms as required. If a minor or resident who cannot lawfully possess a firearm gains access to an unsecured firearm and causes injury as a result, the owner of that firearm may be imprisoned up to five years.
- Authorize grants to states and tribes to assist law enforcement agencies and courts in implementing laws that would similarly prohibit the unsecure storage of firearms.