



Memo of Support A.00563/S.04392

The NYS AAP, representing almost 5,000 pediatricians across the state enthusiastically supports A.00563/S.04392 as a focused child safety component of NYS's gun control efforts. Ongoing efforts to strengthen and expand the SAFE Act, have already gone a long way to help protect children and all New Yorkers from gun violence and continue to improve our ability to help keep children and families safe from gun violence.

But the SAFE Act and its various expansions have not gone far enough in delineating Safe Storage as a key issue in responsible gun ownership. Safe Storage requirements, when implemented with public education and law enforcement supports, have been proven to reduce children's deaths and injury from firearms. They are an important second level of gun violence prevention. This legislation clearly defines safe storage requirements and outlines consequences for not complying with those requirements.

Studies indicate that the presence of an available firearm in the house increases teen suicide. A 2018 Rutgers University study once again proved that teaching young children about gun safety and not to touch guns, simply does not work. We do know that the recent school shooter in Santa Fe, Texas took the unsecured guns from his home to kill students and teachers. We need to help those families who insist on having guns in their homes protect their children and teens from unanticipated tragedies with a requirement for Safe Storage.

Many of these legally owned and licensed firearms are in homes, available and unlocked. **The Rutgers study also found that 85 percent of gun-owning parents did not practice safe gun storage and 72 percent believed their young children could differentiate a toy gun from a real gun, even though the research over the years has proved otherwise.** The intent of this legislation is to encourage Safe Firearm Storage before tragic incidents occur.

Finally, Safe Storage laws work. Seventeen states, including Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts, have passed these laws. Accidental firearm deaths of children, including teen suicide were reduced 40% in states with Child Access Prevention/Safe Gun Storage (CAP) Laws, according to the Giffords Law Center.

We urge our legislators to take this next important step in keeping our children safe from guns.

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