

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees:

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to communicate with you directly on a topic that is very important to me and many Vermonters – gun violence prevention. Gun violence is a public safety issue and must be addressed as such.

In recent years I have been happy to see our Legislature pass Act 45 in support of secure firearms storage. The next step in this effort is to continue to provide education regarding secure storage and no cost means to effectively take action. Cable trigger locks reduce unintentional shootings, unauthorized youth access to firearms, and self-harm risk.

Specifically I am advocating for a line item in the Department of Health's FY27 budget to purchase and distribute inexpensive trigger locks. Cable gun locks are readily available to the public for less than \$5 (with no discount or negotiation), so a small line item in the amount of \$10,000 could make a big difference.

The Department of Health oversees injury prevention efforts. Clearly gun violence prevention fits squarely in that mission. Making trigger locks available at no cost in community spaces such as health facilities, town offices, law enforcement facilities, libraries, etc., along with some basic secure storage information would make a difference in the safety of all Vermonters.

In my advocacy work in Vermont I have often distributed trigger locks at no cost obtained by various organizations through grant funded efforts. No sooner than we had developed a relationship with that provider, their grant funds ran out and we were sent scrambling for another source.

By providing a small budget allocation and designating the Health Department as the distributor, Vermont is taking the next step in showing we are serious about secure firearms storage as a means to improve public safety.

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