



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OHIO**

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Testimony before the  
House State and Local Government Committee  
The Honorable Terry Blair, Chair  
by  
Rosie Craig  
League of Women Voters of Ohio  
October 29, 2013

My name is Rosie Craig from Cleveland, Ohio. I am here as a member of the League of Women Voters of Ohio to speak on their behalf, in support of HB 31. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization, taking a non-partisan approach to the dangerous proliferation of firearms, carelessly left available to children and young people not authorized to have them.

There are few things more heart wrenching than the preventable death of a child. Gun suicides of young people are those losses which rarely make it to the evening news. Of those, Ohio has its share. According to the Center for Disease Control, 306 Ohio children between ages 0-19 killed themselves with a gun between 2000 and 2010.

In an abstract presented Oct. 27 of this year, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in Orlando, researchers identified a link between the percentage of homes with guns and the prevalence of child gunshot injuries. About 500 American children and teenagers die in hospitals every year after sustaining gunshot wounds — a rate that climbed by nearly 60 percent in a decade, according to the first-ever accounting of such fatalities.

Prior to 2006, a number of communities in Ohio had local ordinances making it a misdemeanor offense if a gun fell into the hands of an unauthorized minor. Even before such high profile school shootings as those of Chardon, Ohio; Sparks Nevada; Newtown, Connecticut; shootings where the gun(s) came from home; these Ohio communities understood that children and guns don't mix, and that our communities had a collective responsibility to keep children safe. With the passage of HB 347 in 2006, the Ohio General Assembly, wanting to "clean up" Ohio's Concealed Carry Weapons (CCW) law, took these child access prevention laws and other local gun ordinances, including the ability of a city to keep guns out of city parks, away from municipalities.

Yet those who would not lock their guns in the proximity of children often talk about guns as if they were a safety device like a seat belt or a bicycle helmet, something that can protect but likely harm only the bad guy.

One need only look to Ohio to see that unsecured guns kept for self defense just as easily do irreparable, unintentional harm. Will McAnaul age 3, of Dayton, Ohio, died in 2009 of a gunshot wound after finding a loaded firearm under his parents' bed. The father had placed the gun "in reach" after a burglary at a neighbor's home. Here in Ohio, between the Newton Shooting last December, and this past July 8, 2013: there have been seven accidental child shooting deaths.

If Ohio would not have a patchwork quilt of gun laws across the state, then it should pass HB 31 and provide a uniform law requiring safe gun storage practices for all Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and attention.