

## Committee Members:

In Reed's memory, please vote no to HB2059.

On December 19th, 2018, the day after my dear friend's birthday, her 15-year-old son Reed took his own life using a firearm. Reed was truly an extraordinary young man...he had a heart of gold, was loved by seemingly everyone who knew him, had lots of friends and a family who adored him. Reed had an extremely strong faith and love for Jesus, was an exceptional student and athlete, and had a very bright future ahead of him.

We knew all of this about Reed but what we didn't know was that he was secretly depressed and hurting inside. He didn't tell anyone or ask for help. We believe, based on the notes that Reed left behind, that he wants us to share with our community and beyond that it's OK to not be OK. Reed would have been a senior in high school this year. High school students named Reed "Mr. Unforgettable". Senior parents were asked to post 10 pictures for 10 days. Here are some of the pictures Amy posted of Reed.



Gun suicide claims the lives of 23,000 people in America every year. This public health crisis should be addressed to reduce gun violence in this country. Though gun violence conversations tend to focus on homicides, nearly two-thirds of all gun deaths in the U.S. are suicides. That's an average of 63 deaths a day. These deaths are preventable,

too. Policies and practices that focus on disrupting access to firearms in times of crisis have been proven to reduce firearm suicides.

Most people who attempt suicide do not die—unless they use a gun. Across all suicide attempts without a gun, 4% result in death. But when a gun is involved, that figure skyrockets to 90%. That second chance matters: the vast majority of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die from a later attempt. The research shows that the difference between living to see a better day or dying by suicide is often determined by the presence of a gun. [Having access to a firearm triples one's risk of death by suicide.](#)

Firearm suicide is having a devastating impact on American youth. Over the past decade, the firearm suicide rate among young people has increased faster than in any other age group. Today, it is at an all-time high. As students begin an unpredictable school year in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is concern that the anxiety and loneliness already felt by many young people will continue to increase.

This comes at the same time as the U.S. has seen an unprecedented surge in gun sales, raising concern about the already growing rates of firearm suicide as many youth continue to stay home. But suicide, including firearm suicide, can be prevented. We know that removing access to firearms, a particularly lethal means, is the easiest and quickest intervention. We can potentially save lives by rejecting policies that increase youth access to firearms and instead implement policies that limit easy and immediate access to firearms, raising awareness of risk factors, improving access to mental health care, and supporting America's youth.

Thank you for your time.

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