

Alexander Van Dyke
Moms Demand Action
HB2251

March 26, 2021

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee

Hello, my name is Alex Van Dyke and I'm a communications lead with my local chapter of Moms Demand Action. I am also an Everytown Survivor Fellow and a survivor of gun violence. My testimony will include my survivor story in hopes you will pass these bills.

In May of 2019, I called my mom to ask her what a reasonable price on a new car loan would be. Now, my mother is the single worst bearer of bad news that I know. I called about something benign and she just says, "we're at Marshall's; he just shot his partner and killed himself." I felt numb. I couldn't believe it. Marshall is my stepbrother. We grew up together. We were on the same sports teams from a young age, went to the same schools, and, for a time, had the same group of friends. Our first two years of high school we had a weekly poker game that we rarely missed. He, like me, was a father to two young daughters. Sadly, he no longer gets to watch them grow up and see who they become, the way I get to watch my girls. That night, Marshall and his partner had an argument that turned deadly. There was a gun present; he grabbed it and shot his partner, then turned it on himself. Marshall died instantly, but his partner lived, however she will be on permanent disability and was mostly blinded. This all happened while his youngest daughter and his partner's youngest, both under 2 years old, were in the house. What's worse is that my family's tragedy is just a blip on the radar. In an average month, 53 American women are shot to death by an intimate partner, and many more are injured.

While this bill may not have saved Marshall's life, there are many scenarios just like his that are made more deadly by the presence of a gun. You all can prevent something like this from happening between a known domestic abuser and their partner. You have the chance to save lives. Please take this chance and vote yes on HB2251 before it's too late for another.

With hope,

Alex Van Dyke