

January 9, 2010

To whom it may concern:

I want to express my strong support for the CAP initiative. While understanding the rights conferred on American citizens by the Bill of Rights and respecting gun owners' concerns about the abridgment of those rights, I nonetheless think it is imperative to make sure that these incredibly dangerous devices do not fall into the hands of unsupervised children. The tragic fate of our friend and neighbor Aaron Xue is only one of many such tragedies that befall Vermont families every year. These tragedies are not only unimaginably sad for the families and communities, they are also largely preventable through wise public policy. I urge you therefore to consider the CAP initiative and protect the children of our state.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Zdatny, PhD  
Professor and Chair  
Department of History  
University of Vermont  
12 Debra Drive  
Essex Junction, VT 05452

January 10, 2010

To the Honorable Representative Bill Lippert, and the Honorable Members of the Vermont House Judiciary Committee:

I would like to express my very strong support for passage of a Child Access Prevention law for our state. Laws like the one proposed have been passed in a majority of the states, and research shows that they can help to reduce the risk of firearm suicide. Given that Vermont's firearm suicide rate has been and continues to be high, and that firearms are the means most often used by Vermont youth who die by suicide, it is clearly reasonable to support a bill that does nothing more than to codify the widely accepted notion that adult owners of firearms bear responsibility for taking reasonable measures to prevent children and youth from unsafe access to unsecured firearms.

Please consider carefully the case of Aaron Xue, and ask yourselves why there should be no liability for the owners of the firearms to which he gained access on the night of his suicide. And ask yourself: if your child and others were to visit a friend's house where a loaded handgun was carelessly left out, and if that gun were used by one of the children to shoot your child or another accidentally... wouldn't you think that the owners of that firearm should be bear some liability?

As a father and a primary care pediatrician, I ask you humbly to give this bill the serious consideration it deserves, and to help pass this into law.

Yours truly,

Eliot W. Nelson, MD

Professor of Pediatrics, Univ. of Vermont

Attending in Pediatrics, Vermont Children's Hospital at FAHC

(802) 847-1440

[eliot.nelson@vtmednet.org](mailto:eliot.nelson@vtmednet.org)

January 12, 2009

Dear Rep. William Lippert and the House Judiciary Committee:

I really appreciate your making time to hear Ge Wu and Shuwan Xue's testimony today. What they have to share with all of you matters a great deal because it involves the tragic loss of their beloved son, Aaron. They can best tell you what that loss has meant to them, their family, and their community of friends.

Ge has kindly offered to deliver my written statement. She phoned me last August asking if I could help her and added that she'd received my name from the Vermont Attorney General's office. I told Ge I would do whatever I could to help.

I'm not a politician or a lobbyist, just a dad who's worked as a volunteer on public safety measures for nearly 22 years. You see, my children had a brush with death, when a mad shooter invaded their school. My daughters were spared, but other parents weren't so lucky. Over the years since then I've focused on whatever made sense to prevent future tragedies with firearms. And in that time, sad to report, I've met many parents who've lost children, but none have shown more courage and persistence than Ge and Shuwan. They inspire me.

Please listen to all they have to say. Reflect on it. Consider the written statements they give you.

No doubt some of you might be imagining how hard it could be to pass a Child Access Protection (CAP) law this year, with everything else on your plates.

And when you think how hard this might be, remember Ge and Shuwan. Imagine how much harder it is for them now without Aaron, how they lived through their first Christmas without him. This is for the rest of their lives.

Now imagine your own sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, and the youngsters in your own neighborhood. The same risk factors that led to Aaron's tragic accident are still in play. Our children are right in the line of fire.

We cannot bring Aaron back, but we can prevent the next one. A CAP law will do this.

Florida passed the first CAP law in our nation. Floridians love their guns as much as Vermonters, but they recognized a lethal problem and fixed it. And in the first year it was law in Florida, firearm death and injury to children dropped by 50 %.

Finally, imagine we do nothing now. Then imagine another mom and dad coming before you in a year or so, just like Ge and Shuwan, asking yet again for a CAP law. How do you explain to them you had the chance in 2010 to do it, but instead you tabled the matter for some future time?

We can do this now. It's the right thing, and it will save lives as it has in Florida and the 27 other states that have a CAP law.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,  
Bob Williamson  
2131 Quartz Mountain Way  
South Woodstock, VT 05071  
(802) 457-3609  
rjwmson@aol.com