



Memo To: House Judiciary Committee

Memo From: Abeba Berhane, MD, President
Michigan Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

Re: Support for House Bills 4138-4150

On behalf of the 1,500 members of the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MIAAP), I am writing to express our support for House Bills 4138-4150. As one of the professions that is responsible for tending to the physical, mental, and emotional wounds that are present after acts of gun violence, we welcome this policy-based approach to addressing this crisis. House Bills 4138-4150 seek to provide much needed tools and safeguards to communities in addressing the issue of gun violence.

Since 2017, firearms are the leading cause of death among children and youth 0-24 years of age in the United States. This is a travesty and a problem unique to the United States across the world. This figure reflects the prevalence of guns in accidental deaths, suicides, and homicides. There are unique characteristics and probabilities associated with each of these categories that benefit from the multilayered policy approach reflected in House Bills 4138-4150. For example, for kids aged 0-12 the majority (85%) of gun deaths occur in the home which supports interventions such as the safe storage requirements contained in House Bill 4138.

It is also the case that suicide fatality rates (>90%) are significantly higher than other methods when attempted. Here again, a multilayered approach of including safe storage requirements as well as the provisions of House Bill 4145 related to extreme risk protection orders provide family and community members with the ability to remove guns from individuals demonstrating a risk to themselves or others.

Collectively, this package of bills is designed to address many of the underlying gaps in our regulatory and legal system that foreclose communities from taking common sense precautionary measures to prevent gun violence. The MIAAP supports this approach and believes this legislative package will yield improvements in public health and public safety.

The mission of the MIAAP is to improve the physical, mental and social health of Michigan's infants, children, adolescents and young adults. The senseless acts at Michigan State University and Oxford High School are stark reminders that gun violence will forever impact the lives of many young people and families in Michigan. As pediatricians, we are committed to seeking clinical and policy interventions designed to keep from putting our communities, our children and our families through these traumatic events. We are pleased to support the efforts of the sponsors of these bills and the Committee in their efforts to pass this important legislation.

