

Lisa Subeck

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

To: Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
From: Representative Lisa Subeck
Date: February 14, 2018
Subject: Testimony in support of Assembly Bill 728, relating to storage of firearms in retail facility when unattended.

Chairman Spiros, and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 728, which would require guns stores to safely secure firearms when closed and unattended.

Last April, a Janesville gun shop was robbed of 18 guns and 2 silencers by an individual who smashed a glass door to gain entry. The man responsible has been convicted, but the firearms have not been recovered. In October of last year, criminals drove a vehicle through the front window of a Cross Plains gun shop and were able to get away with 14 firearms. Last month, the same Janesville gun store from the April incident was burglarized, and seven handguns were stolen. The next day another gun store in Oregon, Wisconsin, was burglarized and fourteen guns were stolen in less than 2 minutes after the initial break-in.

These smash and grab robberies continue happening, and the number of guns stolen continues to grow. Guns stolen in these incidents end up on the streets in our local communities. We can prevent these guns from ending up on the street by ensuring they are locked up at night.

Under the bill, each firearm that is located in the place of business where guns are sold must be secured using one of the following methods when the business is closed:

1. Secured in a locked fireproof safe, locked steel gun cabinet, or in a vault in the business premises.
2. Stored in a steel frame display case with a hardened steel lock which is fitted either with smash-proof polycarbonate panels or with glass that is protected with a security or protective laminate film. If the location of the retail store is at street level, one of the following is also required:
 - a. Concrete or hardened steel bollards, or other barriers such as security planters or other devices that protect the location's front entrance, any floor-to-ceiling windows, and any other doors that could be breached by a vehicle.
 - b. Locking steel roll-down doors that are installed on all perimeter doors and floor-to-ceiling windows, unless the installation would violate a state or local fire code.
3. Secured with a hardened steel rod or cable through the trigger guard of the firearm. If the location of the retail store is at street level, one of the following is also required:
 - a. Concrete or hardened steel bollards, or other barriers such as security planters or other devices that protect the location's front entrance, any floor-to-ceiling windows, and any other doors that could be breached by a vehicle.
 - b. Locking steel roll-down doors that are installed on all perimeter doors and floor-to-ceiling windows, unless the installation would violate a state or local fire code.

78TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

4. Stored in a windowless room that is equipped with a steel security door fitted with a deadbolt lock and that does not have a door exposed to the outside of the building.
5. Stored behind a steel roll-down door or security gate or secured in a locked steel gun rack by use of a hardened steel bar.

Last month there was another burglary of a gun store in Janesville, CTR Firearms, but no firearms were stolen. That is because all firearms at CTR are locked in a vault, which acts as their showroom when the business is open. At night the guns are locked up in the windowless, reinforced room. While criminals were able to break into the store, they were unable to get away with any guns. The contrast between this incident and the others I described earlier in my testimony illustrate exactly why we need to pass this legislation.

I worked with both law enforcement and gun shop owners in drafting this legislation and the substitute amendment. I spent time touring gun shops, like CTR, and spoke with owners to learn more about how we can prevent these incidents where criminals are able to steal large numbers of firearms and get away within a matter of minutes. I learned that many gun shop owners already secure their firearms when their businesses are closed, but unfortunately, others do not. Therefore, this bill offers a common sense solution to keep our communities safe and secure for all of our families.

Thank you again for your time and attention to AB 728. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

78TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT