



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

Testimony on Senate Bill 12

Thank you, Chairman Testin and committee members, for hearing Senate Bill 12 today. This bill, and Substitute Amendment 1, will exempt any gun safe or other firearm storage device sold in Wisconsin from the sales tax.

As a former law enforcement officer, I understand first hand how important gun safety is. One of the first things you learn in the academy is how to handle a firearm, to keep you, and everyone around you, safe. Similarly, anyone that wants to get a hunting license in Wisconsin must complete a safety education class.

As most of us understand, the United States Constitution generally guarantees citizens the right to bear arms, but the government can put some restrictions on gun ownership. For example, to purchase a firearm you must pass a background check, and you cannot be a convicted felon. The government can also limit certain places that you can carry a firearm. However, once you've legally purchased your firearm and you are in the privacy of your home, government regulations stop.

The government cannot legislate how someone takes care of their firearm in their own home, and, as I always say, you cannot legislate common sense. However, the government can incentivize making smart decisions.

One way we can incentivize safely storing your firearms is by exempting firearm storage devices from taxes. This could save at least \$5.50 on a small \$100 trigger lock or \$110 on a larger long gun safe.

This won't eliminate all accidental gun deaths and injuries or keep guns out of the hands of individuals that shouldn't be possessing them. But this is something that the government can do to incentivize responsible gun ownership and gun safety, and ultimately this has the potential to save lives.

This is a smart bipartisan bill that has the support of numerous groups of all political persuasions and I hope it will have your support too.

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Adam Neylon

State Representative • 15th Assembly District

DATE: May 21, 2025

FROM: State Representative Adam Neylon

TO: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue

RE: Support SB 12

Chairman Testin and the members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue.

According to the CDC, unintentional injury is the top cause of death among children and adolescents, with firearms being a leading injury method. Unsecured firearms are an important factor in this equation.

This legislation is very simple. It creates a state sales and use tax exemption for the sale of firearm storage devices and firearm safety devices in Wisconsin. The original intent of the bill was restricted to gun safes, but after discussions with constituents and other stakeholders, it was decided to expand the scope to include a variety of firearm safety devices. The substitute amendment to SB 12, which I authored, outlines this expansion and includes the definition of "firearm safety device" and "firearm storage device."

This bill promotes gun safety. By incentivizing the purchase of firearm storage and safety devices, we are encouraging gun owners to store their guns safely. The more guns that are stored safely and securely, the better off our children, and anyone else for that matter, will be from accidental injury, death and suicide.

Thank you for your time.



To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue
From: Lacy Fox, Government Affairs Director, Dane County
Date: May 21, 2025
RE: 2025 Senate Bill 12 | relating to: a sales and use tax exemption for the sale of gun safes

Thank you, Chairman Wanggaard and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue, for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 12, relating to a sales and use tax exemption for the sale of gun safes.

Dane County supports Senate Bill 12 and, its corresponding substitute amendment, in order to reduce accidental deaths, suicides, and unintentional gun discharges by incentivizing and making safe storage more affordable. Not only can ensuring the secure storage of firearms decrease gun-related deaths and injuries but it is also a critical tool in reducing gun violence overall by helping to prevent gun thefts.

As noted in a recent resolution passed by the Dane County Board of Supervisors, one out of every two adults reports being affected by gun violence in Dane County—either directly or through a family member. When these tragedies occur all of those involved are impacted by the lasting trauma.

Importantly, Senate Bill 12 will help protect Wisconsin's children by helping to prevent the unintentional firing of a firearm. Children ranging from toddlers to teenagers become victims of such incidents and while no one piece of legislation will prevent all firearm deaths and injuries, we know limiting access to guns can save lives. We hope this bill will be one part of the solution to creating safer communities across the state and look forward to additional conversations about how to prevent gun-related injury and death.

Thank you again for holding this important public hearing on Senate Bill 12.

May 21, 2025

Wisconsin State Legislature
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue
Wisconsin State Capitol
300 Southeast
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 12 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption for the Sale of Gun Safes

To Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Matuszewski, and I serve as the Associate Executive Director of WAVE Educational Fund and lead the Wisconsin Gun Violence Prevention Coalition.

I'm writing today in strong support of **Senate Bill 12**, which would exempt gun safes and other firearm locking devices from Wisconsin's sales tax. This is a commonsense, bipartisan proposal that encourages responsible gun ownership and helps protect public safety—especially the safety of children and teens.

We know from decades of research that securely storing firearms can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional shootings, youth suicides, and gun theft. Yet millions of children in the U.S. live in homes with loaded, unsecured guns. The vast majority of gun-owning households with children do not store their firearms locked and unloaded. And tragically, guns are now the leading cause of death for children and teens in Wisconsin.

When firearms are not stored securely, they are also more vulnerable to theft and illegal use. In the U.S., an estimated 380,000 guns are stolen each year. Those unsecured firearms often end up in the hands of individuals who use them to commit violent crimes.

SB 12 won't solve every part of our gun violence crisis—but it is a meaningful step. It removes a financial barrier that too often prevents families from taking basic safety precautions. By making gun safes and secure storage devices more affordable, this bill helps ensure that every gun owner in Wisconsin—regardless of income—has the ability to store their firearms responsibly.

While the bill may result in a small reduction in tax revenue, the cost of inaction is far greater. According to data from Everytown, gun violence costs Wisconsin more than **\$8 billion** each year in health care, law enforcement, and other expenses. In that context, a small investment in prevention makes both fiscal and moral sense.

This is about protecting lives, supporting responsible gun ownership, and preventing harm before it happens.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important and life-saving legislation.

Sincerely,
Nick Matuszewski
Associate Executive Director
WAVE Educational Fund