



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

April 2, 2019

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 978. I am a 25-year veteran of the US military, active and reserve, with three deployments. I served as an infantry weapons specialist and have fired most standard military firearms between the 9mm M9 and M2 .50 caliber machine gun. People are often surprised when I say that I unequivocally support safe storage, but safe storage is a fundamental principle of military service and part of a larger culture of firearms safety.

When I served as an infantryman, there were two grave sins that would unleash the ire of any non-commissioned officer present – a negligent discharge and leaving a firearm unattended. A fundamental principle of military life is that firearms must always be locked in storage or attended by a person. Other than military police, military members do not generally go armed in barracks. We draw out our weapons from the armory before going into the field or deploying and return them at the end of that duty.

Even in the field, we do not leave firearms unattended unless secured. I served as a Staff Judge Advocate advising commanders regarding discipline of troops, both in garrison and while deployed. The penalties for the two primary firearms safety violations – negligent discharge and leaving a weapon unattended – were never less than an Article 15 – a career-ending non-judicial punishment – and could merit a court-martial.

It is challenging to describe the visceral dread that the idea of leaving a firearm unattended in the presence of a child brings me as a veteran of the combat arms. We risk our lives to protect civilians. The idea that someone would put a child's life in jeopardy by allowing them access to a firearm without supervision feels like a devaluing of the sacrifices I have made more profound than any purely symbolic gesture like a flag burning.

I believe in the right of lawful armed self-defense. The provisions of SB 978-1 regarding control of a firearm are commonsensical and fully protect that right. Fundamentally, a firearm does you no good in self-defense if someone else can get to it first. This is also the standard that protects children from injury.

Thank you for our time. I urge you to forward SB 978-1 with a do pass recommendation.

Signed,

Marty Wilde

