Submitter: Robert Thomas

On Behalf Of: Boardman

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

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As we consider young people 18 and over to be adults, capable of doing adult activities, such as voting, living on their own, and joining the military, it's not acceptable that those who have no criminal record or have not been judged as mentally incompetent and unsafe owning a firearm, should have any restrictions that those over 21 don't have. If we consider them adults and good citizens, then it is illogical to place restrictions on what guns they can own and carry. There have been tragic school shootings carried out by minors. There's no argument there at all. However, in cases that come to mind, the ball was dropped somewhere. Either adults who were in charge of those kids, or in the case of the Florida shooter, several law enforcement agencies, failed to use good judgement or to communicate the person's issues so that action could be taken to stop them. Those young people in particular obviously shouldn't have had access to firearms. However, they, as in the case of those of us over 21, are a small minority. Almost everyone I know grew up with guns. Our parents or other adults taught us safe gun handling. We had hunter's safety courses in school that taught us more technical safety items and reinforced what we had already been told. In the rural area I grew up in, even into the '90's or maybe early 2000's, according to younger people I know, kids were allowed to bring guns to school in their vehicles as long as they weren't loaded. They would go to or from hunting or just out shooting targets. No one ever had a gun pulled on them, no shootings occurred. There were fights of course, but no guns were used. Just as the over-21 group, they are just as responsible or in a few cases not, as anyone else, provided they have been properly taught, and the schools used to be and still should be involved. The NRA alone has safety programs for small children to adults, much of it free or low cost that can be provided to schools. There is no valid reason to restrict responsible law-abiding citizens of any age from having the guns they want. And if we give the 18-21 group such serious responsibilities as voting, and life or death responsibilities such as joining the military, then we should also be willing to treat them like the adults we say they are as far as firearms go.