

Key Issue(s):

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- **Gun Safety**



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

Action Alert!

Alert No: 17-03

January 17, 2017

This "Action Alert!" is a call to action for League members and friends throughout the state to communicate with their local legislators and various committee members. We try to make them aware of the state League's position on bills that are being considered. While the legislature is in session is the best opportunity to educate legislators and to allow them to make informed decisions.

Children and Unsecured Guns: A Bad Combination!

How many children were injured or died in Virginia in 2016 by children using unsecured guns?

- 2 deaths: an 11-year old boy in Roanoke and a 3 year old in Danville
- 4 serious injuries requiring emergency hospital care: a 3 year old in Gladys, Campbell County; a 3 year old in Suffolk, a 7 year old in Portsmouth, a 4 year old in Norfolk.

In 2015 Virginia had 6 unintentional incidents--3 deaths and 3 injuries

Each one of these occurred because a child found an unsecured gun in the home or car. None of the guns had locks. None of the guns were in a safe. *We have the power to prevent tragedies like these from happening.*

The following bills would help change this bad combination.

[HB 1684](#): It is unlawful for any person to leave a loaded, unsecured firearm in such a manner as to endanger the life or limb of any child under the age of 14.

[HB2098](#): Prohibits access to guns by minors without parental or guardian permission.

[HB1864](#): Adults knowingly giving children 4 years old or younger access to guns has a significant penalty.

[HB1710](#) (Filler-Corn) Gives a sales tax exemption for gun safe purchases.

[SB893](#): Firearm locks are required for sale or transfer of handguns and must give significant warning against access to children.

[SB1266](#): Has a significant penalty for anyone authorizing use of gun by a 4-year old or younger

Support These Bills ASAP: *It is urgent to call or email your legislator and the legislators on the committees that will hear these bills. Click on the link to send an email and remember to cc cnogg@comcast.net*

House Militia, Police and Public Safety Members:

[Wright \(Chairman\)](#), [Gilbert](#), [Webert](#), [Fariss](#), [Bell](#), [John J.](#)

Senate Courts of Justice Committee Members:

[Obenshain\(Chairman\)](#), [Saslaw](#), [Norment](#), [Howell](#), [Lucas](#), [Edwards](#), [McDougle](#),
[Stuart](#), [Stanley](#), [Reeves](#), [Chafin](#), [Deeds](#), [Sturtevant](#)

Need background information?

1.7 million American children live in homes with guns that are both loaded and unlocked. (CDC). A Harvard study found that more than two-thirds of kids know where their parents keep their guns — and many know even when the parents think they don't. Each year in the United States, nearly 100 children under the age of 17 die from unintentional shootings, and more than 400 commit suicide with a gun.

A 2013 investigation by the New York Times [found](#) that number of children killed in accidental gun deaths was twice as high as records indicated. There are no [nationwide statistics](#) on the age of a person behind accidental shootings—not even for those that result in deaths. Since the shooting at Sandy Hook, there has been a concerted effort to track unintentional child shootings based on news reports. (Everytown for Gun Safety). [#NotAnAccidentIndex](#) That has resulted in the following findings:

- About 2 children a week are unintentionally shot and killed
- 70% were not safely stored; remaining were mishandled
- Boys at greatest risk; 10X more likely to pull the trigger
- At great risk when they are toddlers (age 2-4) and older children (ages 12 -14)
- Toddlers are more likely to shoot themselves; older children are more likely to be shot by someone else
- The majority of incidents occur in towns w/ populations less than 50,000 people. Only 10% occur with > 500,000 people
- Gun: 41% belonged to the parent and 35% to another relative
- 2/3 were legally owned guns



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