

Testimony of Kristin Song
United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution
Stop Gun Violence: Safe Storage
May 25, 2021

Good Afternoon Chairman Blumenthal, Ranking Member Cruz, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you so much for inviting me to speak.

I once knew a woman whose eyes sparkled. Her posture was relaxed, her movements deliberate and full of energy. The pleasures in her life were her family and her greatest joys were her children. Her heart was full of gratitude.

Her children grew into teenagers, and she fell more in love with them. Even when she received phone calls, “Mom, I am okay, but the car is totaled.” “Mom, don’t freak out, but I broke my nose in three places.” Or when the school called to inquire if her third child was planning on handing in any homework-ever. She understood these were trials and rites of passage. They were surmountable and good learning lessons for her children.

I saw that woman on January 31, 2018. She and her son had a fun and relaxing morning together. He got his braces off and was so happy. She took a picture of him with his new smile and sent it off to her husband. At breakfast, her beautiful boy told her about his hopes and dreams. He wanted to go to Rice University, join the Army, marry and have seven children.

They returned home, and her beautiful boy walked to his best friend’s house. Later, the woman saw two police officers walking across her lawn. Her heart sank. She heard the ambulance scream by her street, carrying her beautiful boy.

She ran towards the hospital bay where her beautiful boy lay, but she was stopped and guided to a tiny room. The ER doctor slid down the wall, put his head in his hands, and whispered, your beautiful boy was gone. She crawled into a fetal position; she wanted to disappear. Her husband called their daughter and son; she will never forget the raw, guttural sobs that escaped from their mouths.

She begs to see him; she needs to tell him again he is loved and cherished, to kiss his forehead, to tuck him in one last time. The doctor chokes out he is unrecognizable, even to her eyes.

While her family walks out of the hospital, her beautiful boy is being wheeled to the morgue.

The woman and her family sit in silence on the car ride home. There was nothing to say; you can’t fix death.

I saw that woman on February 1, 2018. Her eyes are dull, her posture slumped, her movements as if by rote. She is in a stupor. Her smile has turned to tears; her energy is gone; the pain is so intense she can barely breathe. She doesn’t sleep, and when she does, he visits her, calling to her. She frantically tries to reach him, but he slips through her fingers and slowly fades away. She would have traded places with him in an instant. She sits with her coffee in the kitchen and contemplates suicide *—no more pain*. Her other son grabs her hand and says, “I

would not survive if I lost another member of this family.” How did he know? Was it that obvious? She now knows she has no other choice but to live.

My name is Kristin Song, and I am that woman. The beautiful boy was my 15-year-old son, Ethan.

He was shot in the head in his best friend’s house with an unsecured gun. He had zero chance of survival. The father, the gun owner, stored his three guns and bullets in a shoebox.

What would you do never to be asked these questions by a funeral director, “Do you want to bury or cremate your child? Or, “Do you want a lock of their hair?” You see, that was all he could offer me from my precious child.

To avoid having to answer those questions, would you use a biometric safe that opens in just a few seconds?

I wanted to thank all of the gun owners who secure their weapons. Ethan would have been safe in your houses; he would have walked out of your homes and into my arms.

While I applaud all of the organizations that emphasize that it is the gun owner’s personal responsibility to secure their guns, that is not enough. If it were, I wouldn’t be here today. I would be at home—with my son. We need laws—like *Ethan’s Law*—to mandate safe storage and save lives.

The gun owner could have saved Ethan in the time it takes to draw one breath, simply by locking up his guns. If he had, my beautiful boy, with his infectious smile, would be walking across the stage to accept his high school diploma next month. Instead, that night, while his friends are throwing their caps into the air, I will be sitting at Ethan’s grave—and the only one speaking his name will be me.