

DA'S OFFICE PARTNERS WITH MOMS DEMAND ACTION
TO ADDRESS RISING RATES OF GUN VIOLENCE IN WESTCHESTER

The Westchester District Attorney's Office is partnering with Moms Demand Action to address rising rates of gun violence in Westchester county, DA Miriam E. Rocah announced today.

"Unsecured guns in the home present a major risk to everyone in the household," Rocah said. "Even if you do not own a gun, your children may encounter one at the home of a friend or relative. You have an important responsibility to protect your children from guns."

Studies of all types of school-based gun violence show that keeping students away from guns in the home is a critical way to reduce violence. In a recent study of school violence incidents, [76 percent of the firearms were obtained from the home of a parent or close relative.](#)

Unsecured guns in the home pose a risk to students beyond gun violence in schools. Every year, nearly [350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else.](#) That's roughly one unintentional shooting per day. Additionally, almost 600 children die by gun suicide each year. In the overwhelming majority of these incidents, the gun used was one that belonged to someone in their home.

"Keeping our communities safe from gun violence is one of our top priorities at the Westchester District Attorney's Office and we are partnering with Moms Demand Action to educate all Westchester families about secure firearm storage," Rocah added.

"It's always an adult's responsibility to keep children safe, and keeping guns locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition will do just that," said **Jessica Buck, a volunteer with the New York chapter of Moms Demand Action.** "We're thrilled to be partnering with the District Attorney's Office on this proactive initiative. Securing guns and keeping them out of the hands of kids and teens will save lives."

Children often know where their parents' guns are kept and they can't always tell the difference between real and toy guns. One study found that [87 percent of kids know where their parents' guns are kept and 60 percent have handled them.](#) Simply put, if guns are left loaded and unsecured in a home, children are at risk.

Research shows that [secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction](#) in the risk of firearm injuries among children and teens. Secure storage of firearms protects any child in the home as well as other students throughout the community. Safe storage means:

- Child safety locks or other commercially available locking mechanisms must be used on all firearms.
- Firearms must be locked in a secure location accessible to adults only.
- Ammunition must be locked in a secure location away from the firearms.

The District Attorney's Office will partner with all local schools to provide free resources for families to learn more about secure storage of firearms. Additionally, Moms Demand Action will provide free virtual training about their secure firearm storage program, [Be SMART](#).

DA Rocah urged school districts throughout Westchester to join us in this secure storage initiative and noted that [Moms Demand Action](#) offers a wide variety of secure storage resources.