



Written by [David Kelly](#) on January 26, 2024

White House Announces New Actions to Promote Safe Storage of Firearms

The Biden administration [announced](#) new federal actions on Thursday to help promote the safe storage of firearms in households, adding to an [executive order](#) signed by President Biden last March in response to increasing gun violence.

The administration claimed they are taking comprehensive action to prevent gun violence because it is now “the [leading cause](#) of death of children in America.” The White House claimed that “Approximately [4.6 million children](#) live in homes with unsecured firearms. Studies show that safe storage can dramatically reduce children’s risk of [self-inflicted harm](#) and [unintentional shootings](#).”

The administration statement declared:

Safe storage of firearms can physically prevent youth from accessing firearms, helping to keep youth, schools, and communities safe from gun violence. Unsecured guns are also closely associated with school shootings, youth suicide, unintentional shootings, and theft of firearms.

Highlighting the use of “trusted, credible messengers” such as school officials, community and faith leaders, and law enforcement to “provide guidance on gun violence prevention and safe firearm storage options,” the administration announced the following three actions:

- The U.S. Department of Education will take new action on safe firearm storage by sending [a letter to school principals](#) across the country explaining the importance of safe storage and encouraging them to communicate with parents, families, caregivers, and the broader community about how safe storage can protect students in school and in their communities.
- The U.S. Department of Education will also issue a new communications template that principals and school leaders can use to engage with parents and families about the importance of safe firearm storage and encourage more people to take preventive action by safely storing firearms.
- The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) will release [a guide to safe storage of firearms](#) in order to provide subject matter expertise on different types of storage devices and best practices for safely storing firearms. This is the most comprehensive guide on safe storage ever released by the federal government.

First lady Jill Biden, White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention Director Stefanie Feldman, and U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona hosted a town hall with school principals at the White House



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Thursday to elevate the “importance of safe firearms storage and emphasize the role that principals and education leaders can play in helping prevent gun violence.”

The first lady, speaking at the town hall, said, “You can show parents that they can be part of preventing the next shooting, the next suicide, the next accident,” [reported](#) The Associated Press.

AP continued:

Jill Biden said the number of children lost to gun violence is “unfathomable.” Enough is enough. Enough pain. Enough death. No more funerals,” she said. “I don’t want to have to put my hand on another cross with an 8-year-old’s name. We must change this.”

These new actions are part of the Biden administration’s goal of applying pressure on Congress to move on stalled federal gun-storage legislation such as [S.173](#), otherwise known as Ethan’s Law. The bill “establishes a framework to regulate the storage of firearms on residential premises at the federal, state, and tribal levels,” and includes new “statutory requirements for firearms on residential premises to be safely stored if a minor is likely to gain access without permission or if a resident is ineligible to possess a firearm.”

According to [Spectrum News](#), the [bill is named](#) for “Ethan Song, a Connecticut teenager who was killed by a gun improperly stored in a neighbor’s home, in a Tupperware container alongside ammunition and keys to the gun’s lock, in 2018.”

“We know that most gun owners are responsible and most gun owners don’t want their guns to be stolen, don’t want a toddler to accidentally pick up their gun[,] don’t want their children who might be experiencing depression or suicidal ideation to kill themselves using a gun,” a senior administration official [told reporters](#) on a call previewing the new actions. “So I actually have found in my conversations with gun owners across the country, that the vast majority of gun owners ... support safe storage of firearms.”

The actions announced by the White House are an election year workaround, designed to show that President Biden is acting to “reduce gun violence and make our communities safer.” However, any federal legislation to require safe gun storage — including the Democrats’ goals of federal universal background checks and a federal assault weapons ban — should remain “dead in the water” in a divided Congress.



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