

I am here today as a representative, an advocate, and a leader in my community but most notably as the mother of Kareem Fedd. August 24th, I came home from work and found my son dead, lying in a pool of blood in his bed. In shock, I never once considered that my son had been murdered as he slept. As the days passed and the reality set in that my son was murdered shot multiple times, I knew that I, as his mother, had no choice but to seek answers. I needed to know the who, the why. It took me just weeks, it took the DA five years and eleven months to find out those answers, and through the process, the question about the weapon used is the one that has brought me here today. The gun used in this horrific act of violence was a gun that was bought through straw purchases. Never reported lost or stolen- This gun that was used to kill my son and the lack of laws that could have avoided this are why I am here today. How do we continue watching people murdered in our community at the hands of another or even by their own and sit back and do nothing? What makes it so easy for a gun to get into the hands of a person not responsible for owning a weapon. I will tell you what makes it easy, Pennsylvania's no requirement laws for lost/ stolen or safe storage of weapons. On December 28th, in my community a ten-year-old accidentally shot and killed his eleven-year old brother, with a gun that was not safely stored. No safe, No gun lock, No consequences. Just another fatality, another funeral, another life lost, a young life an innocent life. A family torn apart; a community desensitized. What can we do today? We can add laws to make it the responsibility of gun owners to keep their weapons in safe storage, where kids can't get to them, thieves can't easily take them. We can put into law that weapons owners must report their lost or stolen weapon. Who does this affect? It affects all of us who want to be protected against gun violence. It puts safety measures in place for families who have children or someone with mental health living in their home. It will prevent death it will make us accountable. This doesn't remove rights for gun owners, it gives us the right to be safe from gun violence. The right to live in a safe environment, whether it is our own homes or our community. We have stricter laws for owning a vehicle in the state of Pennsylvania. Please listen to the pleas of myself and the many families here today asking for these laws to be put in place, we are mothers and families who are in this unfortunate club that we did not sign up for. We must do whatever it takes to prevent further acts of violence in our communities. I never thought I would lose a child to gun violence, I bet you don't either.

Jeani Garcia, Survivor

Lehigh County