

Please accept this written testimony for my strong support on SB 868.

This year marks the sixth anniversary of my father's suicide by gunfire. He was 70 years old on this day six years ago. I celebrate this in my own way. I celebrate his life and I celebrate my recognition of his illness and tragic death. I celebrate the importance this day will always have for me and his loved ones. I celebrate knowing that others have lost parents, children, and other loved ones in this way. I searched "death anniversary" today and found that many wonderful religions and countries have words and traditions for this day. In my family, some recognize it as the 2nd of November. Others call it the first Tuesday in November – as it was when he died in 2010. I suppose it is relative, but it is definitely not normal in our culture to even discuss such things. That is obvious.

My father was ill, physically and likely mentally. He always owned guns, and he always referred to death by gun as a potential way out of sickness or pain. Honestly, I have acceptance for his choice albeit an irrational one. He was suffering. As years have passed and I have witnessed and learned more about our country's relationship with guns, as I witnessed two friends physically affected by gun violence, and as I see increases in mass gun violence, I can't help but ask myself every day what the outcome of his life and of my life would be on this 2nd of November, 2016, if he had made a different choice that day. A different suicide attempt? Another call for help? What if there had been no gun in my father's house, no love and appreciation of guns themselves by my father, or no deeply interwoven gun culture in modern America? There are no answers to these questions, but they remain questions nonetheless.

If we don't question this version of a world we have created we would not seek change. I seek change. I made a change this year and it is to advocate, activate, and organize alongside the gun violence prevention movement. Six years ago I lost my father to suicide by gunfire. Countless others have been lost to suicide by gun since that day. What about today, tomorrow, and the next day? What will we celebrate?

Alexander,

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