

Notes for Testimony on HF 517, March 14, 2017

- Iowa-AAP opposes HF 517 because guns and children are a deadly combination and lifting of the 14-year-old limit for possession a handgun will increase the danger for children
- Firearms are also a factor in thousands of child and youth homicides and suicides each year.
- They also lead to accidental injuries and deaths.
 - In the first six months of 2016, gun accidents killed at least one child every other day (according to an AP/USA Today article on October 2016)
 - According to the same report, Iowa is in the second highest quintile in the rate of accidental firearm deaths in 2014-mid-2016
- Iowa-AAP appreciates the House's amending HF 517 to require hands-on supervision – and not just visual and verbal contact. We also recognize there are many gun owners and parents who will conscientiously abide by this requirement
- Unfortunately, we do not trust that all parents will be so careful – the evidence of parents' laxness in supervision and safety provisions is too extensive:
 - DHS finds thousands of parents neglectful each year in care and supervision of their children
 - In its most recent report, the Child Death Review Team found dozens of children suffering preventable deaths: drowning, unsafe sleep positions, failure to use car seats, absence of smoke alarms, and unsecured firearms
- Even the most conscientious of parents face a challenge in ensuring firearm safety:
 - Most children under 14 lack the physical and emotional maturity
 - Guns are very violent and dangerous devices
 - It only takes a few seconds of inattention or mishandling for a serious accident
- The bill's expansion of the areas where firearms can be carried heighten the risk of harm to other children and adults – making this bill a concern for public health and safety
- For all these reasons, we ask you to err on the side of child safety and restore the 14-year-old limit