

AFT-NH Testimony in Opposition to HB 1830 To the House Education Policy Committee



Thank you, Chairman Noble and members of the House Education Policy Committee.

My name is **Debrah Howes**, President of the American Federation of Teachers–New Hampshire. I am here today on behalf of our 3,500 members who work in preK–12 public education, in public services, and in private and public universities across the Granite State. We are New Hampshire taxpayers and citizens, and many of us are parents or grandparents of public school students.

I am here to express AFT-NH’s **strong opposition to HB 1830**, which would require firearm safety education in all public schools.

HB 1830 imposes a one-size-fits-all statewide mandate with no opportunity for local community input. Public schools already follow an extensive set of academic requirements under **RSA 193-E:2-a**, which defines the substantive educational content of an adequate education. This bill adds another unfunded, state-ordered curriculum mandate—and for a non-academic subject—further eroding local control and pulling limited instructional time away from core academics.

Beginning in the 2027–28 school year, HB 1830 would require at least one hour of firearms safety instruction annually unless a parent opts out. The bill also names the NRA Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program—or an equivalent approved by the Department of Education—as the standard for curriculum. DOE would be responsible for developing materials to provide to schools at no cost.

However, research shows the Eddie Eagle program does not reduce unintentional firearms injuries. Children may learn the program’s slogans, but studies show that this **does not** result in safer behavior.¹ Another study found that other training programs were significantly more effective than Eddie Eagle at teaching children safety around firearms.²

Despite this, **HB 1830** elevates Eddie Eagle as the standard. This approach does not follow the evidence. If our goal is to keep children safe around firearms, there are far more effective, evidence-based methods.

Firearms are a leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States. Research consistently shows that adult-centered safe storage policies—not child-focused classroom mandates—are the most effective strategy to prevent injuries and deaths.

We know what works:

- Invest in safe storage initiatives
- Implement child-access prevention policies
- Follow evidence-based safety strategies that reduce risk in the real world

Evidence shows these practices work. Evidence also shows the methods in **HB 1830** do not improve safety.

AFT-NH is not willing to hand over the safety of our students to curriculum initiatives that lack supporting evidence, impose unfunded burdens on local schools, and fail to keep children safe.

We urge the Committee to find HB 1830 Inexpedient to Legislate.

Sincerely,

Debrah Howes

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President, AFT-New Hampshire

1. Study on Eddie Eagle effectiveness: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/114/3/e294/67145/Comparison-of-Two-Programs-to-Teach-Firearm-Injury>
2. Comparative study showing more effective programs:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14702451/>