As lawmakers seek to cope with a rising tide of gun violence while preventing accidental firearm-related injuries and deaths, Ohio could become the next Midwestern state to focus on keeping guns out of the hands of kids — that is if a measure currently pending in the state Senate should advance.

In a roundtable discussion during the July meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference’s Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, Ohio Sen. Vernon Sykes described the proposed Child Gun Safety Act (SB 279), which he and Sen. Charleta Tavares jointly introduced earlier this year.

As Sykes explained to the MLC committee, the proposal would impose criminal liability on adults who fail to safely store their guns and keep them from being accessed by minors. The bill received an initial hearing in June before an Ohio Senate committee.

Similar measures — typically called “child access prevention” or “CAP” laws — have already been adopted in 27 U.S. states, including five in the Midwest. Some of these laws merely prohibit adults from intentionally or recklessly providing gun access to minors; others more aggressively impose criminal and/or civil liability for the negligent storage of firearms, regardless of whether minors actually access or use them.

Various forms of the tougher, negligent-storage prohibitions have been adopted in 14 states, including Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. In contrast, Indiana, Wisconsin and 11 other states have outlawed the intentional, knowing or reckless provision of guns to kids, but not imposed criminal liability for negligent storage.

Almost half of the 50 states, and six of the 11 in the Midwest, have yet to adopt CAP laws, which raises an important question — do they work? The short answer is, it depends on whom you ask.

According to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, recent studies have associated CAP laws with documented declines in accidental deaths, suicides and non-fatal gun injuries among children. And the RAND Corporation has found “supportive evidence” suggesting that CAP laws do effectively reduce suicide attempts and unintentional firearm injuries and deaths among minors.

But the National Rifle Association says CAP laws “are unnecessary, ineffective and endanger law-abiding gun owners.” It points to a competing study that found no evidence indicating that these laws reduce either suicides or accidental firearm deaths among kids.