

To: Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
From: Emily Bierman, Edina
Re: In Support of HF 15
Date: 2/3/2023

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing in enthusiastic support of HF 15. Extreme Risk Protection Orders are common-sense measures that save lives, and it is time that Minnesota takes this simple step towards protecting residents from the rise of gun violence.

I recently moved from Connecticut back to my home state of Minnesota. As a mother, I was thrilled to return to a state that I love and raise my children with the same love of snow, lakes, and lefse that I enjoyed in my youth, but I was sad to leave a state with such robust gun violence prevention laws for a state that lacked basic protections like ERPO. These laws allow law enforcement to intervene and remove firearms from individuals who they believe are at risk of harming themselves or others. These orders are temporary, have robust due process protections, and benefit everyone in the community.

It is common sense that family and household members are the most likely to recognize dangerous warning signs. Allowing them to directly petition the courts will undoubtedly save lives, as time is often of the essence during these crises. As a parent, I am especially aware of how these laws can be used to prevent school shootings. A case study of the use of California's Extreme Risk law found more than 20 cases in which ERPOs were used to effectively disarm people who threatened mass shootings, including a high school student who threatened to commit a mass shooting at a school assembly.¹ Furthermore, in cases of suicidal behavior, families often desire privacy and are hesitant to involve law enforcement. Gun suicides account for 78% of gun deaths in Minnesota, including 55% of gun deaths for children and teens.²

Red flag laws exist in 19 other states plus Washington, D.C.³ These laws have an established record of saving lives—Indiana saw a 7.5% reduction in its firearm suicide rate in the 10 years following the enactment of its Extreme Risk law, and researchers estimate that suicide is averted in approximately one in ten gun removal cases brought under Connecticut's Extreme Risk law.⁴ Furthermore, in 56% of mass shootings, the shooter exhibited dangerous warning signs before carrying out the shooting.

Please support HF 15. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Emily Bierman
Edina, Minnesota

¹ Giffords Law Center, "Extreme Risk Protection Orders," <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/extreme-risk-protection-orders/>.

² Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "EveryStat: Minnesota," <http://everystat.org/#Minnesota>.

³ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Extreme Risk Laws Save Lives," April 17, 2020, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/extreme-risk-laws-save-lives/>.

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Solutions: Extreme Risk Laws," <https://everytown.org/solutions/extreme-risk-laws/>