



Dear Co-Chair Moller, Co-Chair Novotny, and Members of the Committee:

Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, writes today in support of the proposals from Chairs Moller and Scott to improve the gun surrender system for domestic violence in Minnesota. We are a membership-based organization with over 90 member programs who provide domestic and sexual violence prevention and response services in every county in our state.

We produce an intimate partner homicide report every year that tracks every known homicide due to intimate partner violence in Minnesota, and also tracks (among other things) the cause of death. Gunshots are consistently the number one cause of death in cases of intimate partner violence, with about 50-60% of homicides each year attributable to firearms. These numbers are even more skewed when isolating the dataset only to bystanders and intervenors who are killed in an act of intimate partner violence. Guns make an abuser more dangerous both for their direct victim, and for the children, neighbors, friends, first responders, and other family members who are in the direct vicinity of the domestic violence.

Firearms do not function solely as an instrument of homicide, but as an instrument of power and control. Firearms are often used as an especially potent threat to keep victims in compliance with an abuser's demands. Recognizing the danger and power imbalance represented by firearms, this legislature -and legislatures around the nation- has created statutory prohibitions on firearm ownership when a person has committed domestic violence. In Minnesota, people subject to an Extreme Risk Protective Order, an Order for Protection, a Domestic Child Abuse Order, or charged with a domestic violence felony are prohibited from owning a firearm. An issue that these two legislative proposals attempt to tackle is that *only* the Extreme Risk Protection Order has a statutorily prescribed procedure for firearm surrender. The other sources of firearm prohibition have procedures which vary by jurisdiction, and which vary in efficacy.

Survivors deserve a uniform and easy to comprehend system for firearm surrender. They deserve to know exactly how the relief they are entitled to seek will be implemented by the state. They deserve to know who to call, what they'll do, and when. The proposals before you today represent a welcome bipartisan effort to ensure that our public safety system meets this challenge with clarity, effectiveness, and justice for survivors.

Thank you,
Katie Kramer and Nikki Engel
Co-Executive Directors
Violence Free Minnesota