CSGV | THE COALITION TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

THE DATA BEHIND EXTREME RISK LAWS
An Evidence-Based Policy That Saves Lives

Gun violence is a leading cause of violent death in the United States. Risk-based policies that help to create time and space between an at-risk individual and a firearm have great life-saving potential nationwide. A growing body of research suggests that extreme risk laws are valuable gun violence prevention tools.

REDUCING ACCESS TO PEOPLE AT RISK OF VIOLENCE SAVES LIVES

- Gun violence is a public health crisis in the United States. Firearms are the method used in half of all U.S. suicides and three-quarters of all U.S. homicides, taking over 36,000 lives each year - nearly 100 every single day.[1] The toll of gun violence on American families and communities is significant.
- Easy access to guns significantly increases risk of both firearm suicide and homicide.[2,3]
- Policies are needed that reduce easy access to firearms by people who are at elevated risk of violence.

EXTREME RISK LAWS ARE EVIDENCE-BASED

Most extreme risk laws are known as *extreme risk protection orders*. The policy was developed by the Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy (Consortium) in 2013 based on the leading research on risk factors for violence. The Consortium called for states to pass a policy that empowers law enforcement and family members to work with courts to temporarily remove firearms from those who pose a danger to themselves or others.[4]

RESEARCH ON EXTREME RISK LAWS

As of October 2019, 17 states and the District of Columbia have extreme risk laws and four peer-reviewed studies have examined the impact of these laws.

Implementation and effectiveness of Connecticut's risk-based gun removal law: Does it prevent suicides? *Swanson et al. (2017).[5]*

Researchers studied Connecticut's extreme risk law from 1999-2013 and found 762 orders (called "risk-warrants") were issued in that time period, increasing in frequency after the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting. They found that risk-warrants reached people who were at a dangerously elevated risk of suicide and prevented additional suicide deaths by intervening in suicidal crises.

- The typical risk-warrant subject was a middle-aged or older man and suicidality or self injury was listed as a concern in at least 61% of cases where such information was available.
- Police found firearms in 99% of cases, removing an average of seven guns per subject.
- People in Connecticut subject to orders had an annual suicide rate 40 times higher than the general population, showing the increased risk among this population.
- **For every 10-20 orders issued, at least one suicide was prevented.**

Effects of risk-based firearm seizure laws in Connecticut and Indiana on suicide rates, 1981–2015. *Kivisto & Phalen (2018).[6]*

Researchers studied the state-level impact of Indiana and Connecticut's extreme risk laws on suicides. They used statistical modeling to estimate what the firearm suicide rate would have been in each state if it did not have an extreme risk law. They then compared the real firearm suicide rates to the rates predicted by the statistical model.

- Indiana's extreme risk law was associated with an estimated 7.5% reduction in firearm suicides.
- Connecticut's extreme risk law was associated with an estimated 13.7% reduction in firearm suicides.
- **The researchers concluded that extreme risk laws were linked to promising reductions in firearm suicides in both Connecticut and in Indiana.**

Criminal justice and suicide outcomes with Indiana's risk-based gun seizure law.
Swanson et al. (2019).[7]

Researchers studied Indiana's extreme risk law from 2006-2013 and found that 395 firearm removal orders were issued, and 1,079 firearms were temporarily removed. The researchers found that orders were issued for individuals at a dangerously high risk for self-harm.

- Suicidal ideation was cited as a reason for issuing the order in nearly 70% of these cases.
- Domestic disturbance was cited in 28% of cases and homicidal ideation was cited in 21%.
- The majority of cases involved white men with suicidal ideation where police removed more than one firearm.
- People in Indiana subject to orders had an annual suicide rate 31 times higher than the general population, showing the increased risk among this population.
- **One suicide was prevented for every 10 firearm removal orders issued.**

Extreme risk protection orders intended to prevent mass shootings: A case series.
Wintemute et al. (2019).[8]

Researchers studied California's extreme risk law by examining the court records of 159 orders issued from 2016 to 2018. They concluded that California's extreme risk law has been used as a tool to help prevent numerous mass shootings, and they examined each of these cases in depth.

- In 21 orders, the subject showed clear signs that they intended to commit a mass shooting.
- Orders were used as a tool by law enforcement to help prevent school, workplace, and politically motivated mass shootings.
- No mass shootings, suicides, or homicides associated with order subjects were identified to have occurred after the orders were issued.
- **The authors concluded that extreme risk laws may play a role in efforts to prevent mass shootings.**

Extreme risk laws save lives. Grounded in evidence and based on risk of violence towards self or others, these laws are helping to prevent gun deaths and protect communities from tragedy.

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Firearm Deaths and Rates per 100,000. WONDER Online Database, 2013-2017. Available: http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html.

[2] Anglemyer A, Horvath T, & Rutherford G. (2014). The accessibility of firearms and risk for suicide and homicide victimization among household members: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

[3] Dahlberg LL, Ikeda RM, & Kresnow MJ. (2004). Guns in the home and risk of a violent death in the home: Findings from a national study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

[4] Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy. (2013). Guns, public health, and mental illness: an evidence-based approach for state policy. Available: http://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Final-State-Report.pdf.

[5] Swanson JW, et al. (2017). Implementation and effectiveness of Connecticut's risk-based gun removal law: Does it prevent suicides? *Law and Contemporary Problems*.

[6] Kivisto AJ & Phalen PL (2018). Effects of risk-based firearm seizure laws in Connecticut and Indiana on suicide rates, 1981–2015. *Psychiatric Services*.

[7] Swanson JW, et al. (2019). Criminal justice and suicide outcomes with Indiana's risk-based gun seizure law. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*.

[8] Wintemute GJ, Pear VA, Schleimer JP, Pallin R, Sohl S, Kravitz-Wirtz N, et al. (2019). Extreme Risk Protection Orders Intended to Prevent Mass Shootings: A Case Series. *Annals of Internal Medicine*.