



Protect Public Health. Implement Evidence-Based Policies to Support Gun Safety.

Maine's gun laws are among the least restrictive in the U.S. Research shows that states with more relaxed gun laws have higher rates of gun violence, including higher rates of mass shootings.

There are evidence-based policies we can implement now to reduce gun violence in Maine's communities:

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), aka Red Flag Laws:

ERPO laws, otherwise known as Red Flag laws, enable law enforcement, family members and others to go through the court to temporarily remove firearms from people who pose a danger to themselves or others in the community. According to The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, data show that, when implemented effectively, ERPO laws can save lives. Twenty-one states, including Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts have enacted ERPO laws.

Ending the Sale of Assault Weapons:

Assault weapons are designed to inflict mass casualties in a short amount of time. They are weapons of war. In the last decade, assault weapons have been used in the seven deadliest mass shootings, and an analysis of mass shooting deaths showed that assault rifles accounted for nearly 86% of the total 501 fatalities reviewed.

Research shows that mass shooting-related deaths declined during the 10 years that the federal assault weapons ban was in place (1994-2004). Studies also indicate that states that implement assault weapons bans see a reduction in mass shooting-related fatalities.

Background Checks:

There is a loophole in federal law that does not require background checks on sales of guns by private or unlicensed individuals. In states that have not closed that loophole, like Maine, people who would fail a background check because of previous behavior can still obtain weapons. For example, in Texas, someone who previously failed a criminal background check when trying to purchase a gun obtained an AR style weapon from an unlicensed seller, bypassing the background check. He killed 7 people and wounded 25 others.

Research shows background checks reduce other types of violence, including domestic violence, which is also associated with mass shootings. Background checks are an important foundation on which to build other gun violence prevention policies.

Waiting Periods:

Research suggests that implementing a waiting period for gun purchases can reduce impulsive acts of violence. One study found that waiting periods for gun purchases of just a few days reduce gun homicides by about 17%. Similar to background checks, waiting periods are associated with lower incidence of domestic violence, which could lower the risk of mass shootings. There is an association between high-heat days and increased violence. Waiting periods provide time for agitated individuals to "cool down" before being able to obtain a weapon.

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Sources:

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