



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Despite Tragedy, War on Colorado's Gun Safety Laws Resumes**

*2018 Legislative Session begins Wednesday, Jan. 10th*

Despite the recent horrific ambush of Douglas County Sheriff's deputies, one of whom was shot and killed in a barrage of gunfire, efforts to repeal some of Colorado's common-sense gun laws could begin as early as this week, when the 2018 legislative session gets underway.

"Most Republicans and some Democrats have tried every single legislative session to repeal some of our sensible gun laws," noted Eileen McCarron, with Colorado Ceasefire.

"In 2013 Colorado enacted a number of firearms measures, including a universal background check law, a law to require relinquishment of firearms by domestic violence offenders, and a prohibition on high capacity ammunition magazines. These laws were passed because Coloradans were dismayed and disgusted by the Columbine and Sandy Hook shootings," she added. "With this latest tragedy, it's clear we need more gun safety laws, not fewer."

In recent years, a primary focus has been on repealing the High Capacity Magazine ban. Republican senators Chris Holbert (Douglas County), John Cooke (Greeley), Vicki Marble (Broomfield), Tim Neville (Littleton) and Republican representatives Lori Saine (Erie) and Stephen Humphrey (Severance) have led the effort in that repeal. Although the Douglas County Sheriff's office has not released information on the guns that were used in the December 31st shooting, we do know that a gun dealer in Wyoming listed 11 items firearms purchased by the shooter, including at AR15 with 100-round capability.

During the 2016 effort to repeal Colorado's high capacity magazine ban, Sen. Cooke, a former Sheriff, said on the floor of the senate "I tell my people to go to Wyoming." Sen. Cooke was, in essence, advising "his people" to break the law, as possession of magazines greater than 15 rounds is only allowed if one were in possession of the magazine on July 1, 2013.

Wyoming has no ban on high capacity magazines, and appears to be the source for weapons and ammunition used by the perpetrator in Sunday's ambush.

Moreover, the University of Wyoming Police Chief who tried to warn Lone Tree police about the shooter's state of mind, told the Denver Post that, "they were hoping that Colorado laws might be more flexible, possibly allowing officers to have Riehl committed to a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation." Matthew Riehl was the shooter in Douglas County.

"It's worth noting that there is such a law that might have helped prevent the ambush," stated Ceasefire's Mary Blegen, "but unfortunately, we don't have it in Colorado." She noted that the Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) or Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) law (already law in Connecticut, Indiana, California, Oregon and Washington) would allow

families and law enforcement officers to place a one-year restraining order on gun ownership by an individual they believe to be at a high risk of harming himself or others.”

With respect to the dangerous inclinations exhibited by the Douglas County shooter, District Attorney George Brauchler shared with Channel 7 News that “I wish there was something that was there that we could have acted on . . . I don’t see it. I don’t know what that thing is.” Blegen suggested “that ‘that thing’ is a Gun Violence Restraining Order, which could have been used by the shooter’s family or Lone Tree Police to disarm the individual and help him get the therapy he needed.”

Unfortunately, it’s highly unlikely that such a law will be introduced this legislative season. If we at Ceasefire had one New Year’s wish, it would be that partisanship on this issue would be bridged and that Democrats and Republicans would work together to enact public safety laws that protect citizenry and law enforcement alike. A Gun Violence Restraining Order type of law would be an excellent start.

*Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been working for freedom from gun violence since 2000. Ceasefire initiated and was instrumental in the enactment of the 2013 Colorado firearms laws, which included universal background checks, a high capacity magazine ban, and domestic violence firearms relinquishment.*

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