



Working for freedom from gun violence

<http://www.coloradoceasefire.org/>

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**NEWS STATEMENT**

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In the wake of the shooting death Monday of Sheriff's Deputy Micah Flick and the wounding of three other El Paso County officers, the grim toll of gun violence in Colorado climbs to three dead peace officers in just five weeks.

"We are angry and saddened at this death," said Tom Mauser, father of Columbine victim Daniel Mauser and spokesperson for Colorado Ceasefire. "Saddened at the loss of another young man dedicated to protecting the citizens of Colorado, and angry that Colorado still lacks gun laws and enforcement that would make police officers' jobs less dangerous."

Mauser noted that gun laws, when well enforced, can help lower deaths from gun violence. If Colorado had a law allowing Gun Violence Restraining Orders, also called Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO), it's possible that the ambush of the sheriff's deputies in Highlands Ranch on December 31<sup>st</sup> might have been averted. Such protection orders allow families and law enforcement to seek court orders to temporarily prohibit possession and purchase of firearms by persons who are in crisis.

Gun licensing laws, efforts to reduce gun thefts, and tighter enforcement of required background checks might have prevented the alleged shooter in Adams County, a previous offender, from illegally obtaining weapons (the El Paso County shooter's criminal record is yet to be released).

“There is no one single law that will magically protect citizens and law enforcement from the 300 million guns in this country,” said Mauser, “But a combination of laws has been shown to reduce gun violence.”

Eileen McCarron, also with Colorado Ceasefire, called on gun owners and gun sellers to lock up their firearms to reduce the number of stolen guns. She pointed out that firearms taken in gun store burglaries, which have increased markedly in the last several years, are very likely intended for criminal use. In an in-depth investigation, The Trace, an online newsletter, found that in Denver 600 lost and stolen guns turned up at crime scenes, including four murders.

A bill to impose higher penalties for gun burglaries is pending in the Colorado House ([HB 1077](#)). But McCarron believes that a more effective action would be for gun store owners to reduce the flow of guns to criminals by locking up their merchandise each night. She also called on peace officers to do more to ensure that gun sales are legal, including implementing sting operations aimed at gun shows, newspaper and on-line sales to capture bad actors.

Licensing of gun owners can have a big impact on gun deaths. Five years ago, Missouri repealed its licensing law and saw a 25% increase in gun violence and a 14% increase in murders. When Connecticut implemented such a law, it saw a 40% decrease in gun homicides over the ensuing ten years.

“Our police officers and sheriff’s deputies should not have to fear for their lives every time they answer a call for help,” Mauser stated. “Nor should our citizens have to fear gun violence in places of worship, schools, theatres or the streets. Gun laws work. We need stronger, more effective laws and laws that close dangerous loopholes.”

***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 Colorado’s firearms laws, which include universal background checks, a ban on high capacity magazines, and relinquishment of firearms from those accused of domestic violence.***

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