



For Immediate Release

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For information, contact:

Eileen McCarron 303-946-6959 or 303-377-7697

DENVER -- In a well-attended news conference at the state capitol today, State Representatives Alec Garnett (D-Denver) and Tom Sullivan (D-Centennial) and State Senators Lois Court (D-Denver) and Brittany Pettersen (D-Lakewood) announced the introduction of an Extreme Risk Protection Orders bill (HB19-1177). The bill is named for Deputy Zackari Parrish III, who was shot and killed in an ambush in Douglas County on December 31, 2017.

An ERPO law would enable law enforcement and families to seek protection orders to temporarily remove firearms from persons dangerous to themselves and others. Thirteen other states have enacted such a law, including Florida. Today marks the one-year anniversary of the mass shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

A similar bill introduced last year in the Colorado legislature passed the House on a bi-partisan vote but failed in the Republican-led senate. Sponsors are hopeful that the proposal has a higher chance of success this year.

Speaking today at the news conference, Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock thanked the sponsors of the bill who have stood up to make a difference that is so important for the people of Colorado. "This is a tool that the men and women of law enforcement can use to keep our citizens and communities safe," he said.

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle noted the importance of extreme risk protection orders when trying to help and protect people in the midst of behavioral health crises.

Several victims of gun violence were on hand to express support for the bill.

Jane Dougherty, whose sister Mary Sherlach was the school psychologist at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut and was killed along with 20 first graders and 5 other educators, pled for Republicans to be brave and support the bill.

Senator Pettersen read a statement from the parents of Deputy Parrish, who stated that Colorado should limit accessibility of guns to someone who is suffering from a behavioral health crisis. They also noted the importance of protecting first responders and the community at large.

Representative Sullivan remembered his son Alex, who died on his 27th birthday in the Aurora Theater shooting. Sullivan was wearing Alex's jacket and stated he does so every day as he heads to the capitol to remind himself of what he has lost and of the importance of the work he is doing.

"The pain of losing a child is something no one should experience," Sullivan asserted. "We cannot afford to stay in our lane on these issues." He called for bi-partisan support of the bill.

Representative Garnett shared that recent polling has found over 80 percent of Colorado voters – and 60 percent of Republican voters -- support the Extreme Risk Protection Orders concept.

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. Ceasefire began advocating for an ERPO law 2016.

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