



For Immediate Release

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For Information Contact:

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

www.ColoradoCeasefire.org

School Shooting in Highlands Ranch

HIGHLANDS RANCH, COLORADO – In the wake of a Douglas County school shooting today that left one student dead and another eight students wounded, Eileen McCarron of Colorado Ceasefire said a recent resolution by the county commissioners put gun rights ahead of the health and safety of their constituents.

When the Extreme Risk Law, which would allow law enforcement to seize guns when the owner was a threat to themselves and others, was passed by the Colorado legislature and signed into law by Governor Jared Polis, Douglas County Commissioners adopted a resolution stating that they "... will fund the enforcement of only those duly enacted state laws that fully respect and support the Constitutional rights of our citizens, including their rights to due process, to bear arms, and to defend themselves from evil." District Attorney George Brauchler, whose district includes the county, has also been vocal in his opposition to the Extreme Risk law.

"Clearly Douglas County is not immune to the ravages of easily available guns," she stated. "We hope they reconsider that position in light of this school shooting."

While it is not yet known whether the parents of the two suspects or the school knew about plans for the attack, McCarron said any attempt to prevent the shootings by alerting law enforcement and asking a judge to order that the guns be removed, as permitted under the Extreme Risk Law, would have been thwarted by the resolution.

Sheriff's deputies have arrested two suspects in the shooting at the K-12 STEM School Highlands Ranch in Douglas County. The suspects and victims are reportedly all students. Sheriff Tony Spurlock stated that the weapon used was a handgun.

Highlands Ranch is an affluent suburb to the southwest of Denver. The school is about five aerial miles from Columbine High School, which less than two weeks ago remembered the twelve students and one educator shot and killed twenty years ago. Just prior to that anniversary, schools throughout the Front Range were shut down due to reliable reports of a Florida teenager obsessed with the shooting having purchased a shotgun at a store only a few miles from the Columbine school.

Ironically, the Extreme Risk Law recently enacted was called the Deputy Zackari Parrish, III, Violence Prevention Act. Parrish was a Highlands Ranch deputy murdered in an ambush that occurred on December 31, 2017 about 2.5 aerial miles from the STEM school. A major proponent of the Extreme Risk Law was Sheriff Spurlock, who has received a great deal of criticism from his county commissioners. Additionally, gun rights proponents have been discussing plans to seek Spurlock's recall.

Where did the shooters get the handgun? Under Colorado 2013 Universal Background Check law, the only legal purchasers of handguns are those 21 years or older. This likely will be a major consideration in the investigation, but a Wall Street Journal report in April 2018 stated that in 20 school shootings where details were available, 17 guns came from the home of the shooter, with a few students obtaining them from other relatives.

McCarron expressed Ceasefire's condolences to the entire Highlands Ranch community: "As parents tearfully reunite with their children, we especially hold in our thoughts the family of the deceased student and those families who are sitting in hospital waiting rooms praying for their loved ones."

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 Extreme Risk law in 2016, which was signed by the Governor on April 12th this year.

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