



Legislative Action

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More Guns or Gun Safety? What's Next for Colorado?

DENVER --Last week, in Denver's southern suburbs, three teenage boys were shot and killed, two of them by teenage boys. The most notable shooting was the one that occurred at the STEM School Highlands Ranch, a shooting that traumatized an entire school of 1800 students. [In Centennial a Cherokee Trails high school student was shot and killed outside his home](#), allegedly by a 17-year old, apparently over e-cigarette liquids. [A 16-year-old was also shot and killed in a southeast Aurora park.](#)

While Coloradans reel over these senseless shootings, the gun lobby has been busy. They've started a second amendment sanctuary movement. They are planning two rallies this weekend, one in opposition to Colorado's new Extreme Risk law. And, along with the state Republican Party, they are attempting recall campaigns, including one against Rep. Tom Sullivan, (D-Centennial), the sponsor of the state's new Extreme Risk Protection Order Law.

"Coloradans are fed up with gun violence," stated Eileen McCarron, president of Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action. "Parents, faith communities and law-abiding gun owners want common sense gun laws," she said. "The gun lobby in this state knows it and is doing everything it can to maintain the status quo."

The Extreme Risk Protection Order law, signed by Gov. Polis in April, is considered by gun safety experts, mental health professionals, and many law enforcement officers to be an essential tool in reducing gun violence.

Not a single Republican, including legislators from Highlands Ranch or Douglas County, where the latest school shooting took place, voted for the bill. And Douglas County Commissioners passed a resolution putting gun rights before public health and safety.

In the legislature, Douglas County representatives Mark Baisley, Patrick Neville and Kim Ransom argued that we should be addressing mental health and not guns in order to curb gun violence. Yet, when they had a chance to vote for a bill requiring insurance companies to give parity to mental health treatment, they, along with Kevin Van Winkle (R-Highlands Ranch), voted against it. The bill passed both chambers with bi-partisan support, with just five Republican senators, one being Minority Leader Chris Holbert of Highlands Ranch, voting against it.

We don't know where all the guns came from in last week's teenage carnage, but expect that the underage shooters either took guns from an improperly stored home arsenal, stole them, or purchased them illegally. Each of these scenarios involves irresponsible or illegal conduct by gun owners that should be addressed. Potential legislation includes:

- 21-year age requirement for long gun purchases
- Safe storage of guns, in homes and stores
- Required reporting of lost or stolen guns
- Strong security requirements for gun stores

McCarron commented that "In a country awash in firearms, an estimated 380 million, teenagers finding lethal weaponry so readily available translates into deadly tragedies and destroyed families. In some, and maybe all, of last week's fatal shootings, parents bought handguns to protect their families, but the weapon instead destroyed two families – those of the victim and of the shooter."

Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has worked 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. The law allows family members or law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily suspend firearms access to dangerous persons.

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