



NEWS STATEMENT

Eileen McCarron

President, Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action

303-946-6959

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2021

BACKGROUND ON GUN BILLS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY GOVERNOR POLIS

In response to the Boulder mass shooting, three gun reform measures were introduced to the Colorado General Assembly. Combined with a domestic violence bill already underway, the quartet of gun violence prevention bills have now all successfully passed the Colorado General Assembly and are headed to Governor Polis for his signature. If signed into law, Colorado will have enacted six gun reform measures in this 2021 session.

HB21-1255 – Domestic Violence Relinquishment of Firearms

This bill tightens the procedures for relinquishment of firearms by domestic violence offenders. These relinquishments are life-saving, as women whose abusers have access to a gun are five times more likely to die at the hands of their abuser as those whose abusers don't have such access. Domestic abusers also target others, as in 2019 when 10-year-old Ty Tesoriero was murdered by his father, a case where the 18th Judicial District court and prosecutors didn't secure firearms relinquishment as specified in a 2013 law.

The other three bills were important changes in Colorado's laws spurred by the Boulder mass shooting in late March.

SB21-256 Local Regulations of Firearms

In 2018 the city of Boulder enacted an assault weapons ban. It was overturned only ten days before the Boulder shooting on preemption grounds. SB21-256 repeals preemptive provisions enacted in 2003. It will allow cities and counties to restrict beyond state and federal law the transfer and possession of firearms, accessories, components, and ammunition. It additionally allows cities, counties, special districts and colleges and universities to prohibit the carrying of firearms into public buildings and in specific areas under their jurisdiction. For example, if the bill becomes law, the city of Denver would be

able to prohibit guns in libraries, recreation centers, the Denver Zoo, the Museum of Nature and Science, etc.

Opponents of the bill made a number of erroneous claims about the bill. Despite their view, this bill would not prohibit a rancher from defending their livestock, nor allow a special district to ban ammunition, nor even affect an out-of-towner with a concealed weapon when he walked across the street to a different restaurant. Regardless of the arguments, the bill does not affect the choices of private businesses as to concealed carry on their premises. Furthermore, the bill can not be unconstitutional as it doesn't contain any restrictions on firearms whatsoever. What it does do is allow local governments to decide what is appropriate for their communities.

HB21-1298 Expanded Background Checks

Only three years ago, the alleged Boulder shooter had violently assaulted a fellow student. HB21-1298 expands background checks to prohibit the transfer of firearms for five years to persons with violent misdemeanor convictions. Research has shown that persons who have one violent conviction are nine times more likely to commit murder, aggravated assault (with weapon), robbery and rape than persons with no violent record. With two offenses, they are fifteen times as likely to do so. The bill also removes the Charleston Loophole by requiring that the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) provide background check clearance before a gun transfer can take place. In 2015, nine worshippers at a Charleston, S.C., church were murdered by a man who was a prohibited buyer, but whose background check had not been completed within the federal 3-day limit. The bill also doubles the time CBI has to resolve appeals to background check denials from 30 to 60 days.

HB21-1299 Office of Gun Violence Prevention

The alleged Boulder shooter had been exhibiting dangerous tendencies, but for unknown reasons, his family did not seek an Extreme Risk Protection Order. HB21-1299 creates the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, which will oversee public awareness campaigns (including ERPO) and research collaboration, be a repository of data and research, and be responsible for awarding grants for violence intervention programs as monies become available. There are likely federal funds that can be dedicated to proven and innovative programs that address what is often, and unsettlingly, termed "everyday" gun violence. Representative Judy Amabile expressed dismay that gun violence has become so normalized that we now refer to some shootings as "everyday"? The bill carries a fiscal note for \$3 million.

On April 19th, Governor Polis signed into law two bills addressing gun violence. One requires the safe storage of firearms, while the other requires reporting of lost and stolen firearms.

Colorado has suffered far too many deaths and injuries at the hands of irresponsible and criminal use of firearms. Gun violence is a multi-faceted problem, and no one measure will address all cases, but the bills headed to the Governor's desk are dedicated directly to the task of saving lives. Colorado Ceasefire urges the Governor to sign these four important gun violence prevention bills.

Colorado Ceasefire, Colorado's oldest gun violence prevention 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 Protection Orders (red flag) law in 2016, which became effective January 1st of 2020