

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS WISCONSIN URGES  
IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGISLATION

NASW WI calls upon the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass LRB 3007, a bill establishing an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) procedure for Wisconsin and LRB 2751, requiring that all gun transfers go through a federally licensed gun dealer.

An Extreme Risk Protection Ordinance would allow family members, household members and law enforcement officials to petition a court to take a gun out of a home for up to a year from someone who is a danger to him/herself or others. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have passed such legislation.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders have been shown to reduce suicides. Research conducted by Dr Aaron Kivisto and Peter Lee Phalen showed a reduction in suicides as a result of the passage of Extreme Risk Protection Ordinances in the two states who have had the law the longest-Indiana and Connecticut. 1

ERPO bills are needed to prevent suicide because 90% of suicide attempts using a gun are fatal, compared to 5% of most common alternative methods.<sup>2</sup> Suicide acts are often impulsive and fleeting and thus preventing access to a gun at that moment can save lives.<sup>3</sup> In addition an intervention at that point, often leads to getting an individual into mental health treatment.<sup>4</sup>

Wisconsin's suicide rate is higher than the national average.<sup>6</sup> If we are truly committed as a state to reducing our suicide rate during this Suicide Awareness Month, we need to implement all policies that have been shown to be successful, including an Extreme Risk Protection Ordinance.

Requiring all gun transfers to go through a federally licensed gun dealer will also save lives. Currently individuals who would never pass a background check can purchase a gun through a gun show or over the Internet. In the ten years following Connecticut's passage of its law requiring a permit and background check on all handgun sales, firearm homicides declined by 40%.<sup>7</sup>

1. Kivisto, Dr. Arron and Phalen, Peter Lee, “Effects of Risk Based Firearms Seizure Laws in Connecticut and Indiana Suicide Rates 1981-2005, Psychiatryonline.org, June 1, 2018
2. The epidemiology of case fatality rates for suicide in the northeast. Matthew J. Miller, Deborah Azrael, David Hemenway. 2004  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15159703>
3. <https://waveedfund.org/preventing-suicide-through-sensible-policy>
4. Swanson, Jeffrey, Dr. et al, “Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut’s Risk-Based Gun Removal Law: Does it prevent suicides? Law and Contemporary Problems, 2016
5. Fatal and non-fatal repetition of self-harm. Systematic Review. David Owens, Judith Horrocks, Allan House 2002  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12204922>
6. Suicide Statistics, American Society for Suicide Prevention (AFSP),  
<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics>
7. Rudolph K. et al, “Association between Connecticut’s permit to purchase handgun law and homicides,” American Journal of Public Health, June 2015