

TO: The Honorable Representative Kelly Moller, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Paul Novotny, Co-Chair
Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

FROM: Lisa Geller, MPH
Senior Advisor for Implementation
Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: March 28, 2025

RE: HF 134 – Violence prevention project research center appropriation

My name is Lisa Geller and I am the Senior Advisor for Implementation at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions (the Center). In my role, I lead the Center’s implementation team and direct our strategy on implementing evidence-based gun violence prevention policies. I co-lead a center focused on training and technical assistance for extreme risk protection order (ERPO) laws. Additionally, I conduct research on the impact of gun laws on gun violence and have advocated for evidence-based gun policies at both the state and federal level. I have over a decade of experience in the gun violence research, policy, and implementation field. My testimony in support of HF 134 is made in my individual capacity and does not necessarily reflect the views of Johns Hopkins University.

Minnesotans, like all Americans, are not immune from gun violence. In 2023, there were 525 gun deaths in Minnesota, including 379 firearm suicides and 128 firearm homicides.¹ This public health crisis requires continued, independent, and nonpartisan research. The Violence Prevention Project Research Center is one such entity that advances this mission in Minnesota. I have worked with researchers at the Violence Prevention Project for several years to both disseminate research findings and to better implement extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) in Minnesota.

Minnesota’s ERPO law was signed into law in May 2023 and went into effect on January 1, 2024.² This tool allows law enforcement and family/household members in Minnesota to petition a court to order the temporary firearm removal for an individual at risk of harm to self and/or others. While ERPOs are still a relatively new policy – and certainly are nascent in Minnesota – research shows that they have an impact on reducing firearm suicides and have been used in efforts to prevent mass shootings. For example, a recent study using data from four ERPO states

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2024. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2023, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html> on Mar 28, 2025.

² Minnesota’s ERPO law. Available: <https://erpo.org/state/minnesota/>

found that one suicide was prevented for every 17 to 23 ERPOs issued.³ A study from an early adopting ERPO state found that the law was used in efforts to prevent at least 21 mass shootings in a three-year period.⁴

Thanks to the researchers at the Violence Prevention Project Research Center, we already have access to a full year of ERPO data in Minnesota (January 1 – December 31, 2024) and can see how the law works almost in real time. As we learned from a recent editorial in the *Minnesota Star Tribune*, authored by the co-directors of the Violence Prevention Project Research Center, there were 135 ERPOs filed in Minnesota in the first year of implementation.⁵ Of those orders, 36% were domestic violence-related and 25% involved a respondent experiencing psychosis. Further, nearly one-third (29%) resulted in intervention to prevent a potential murder-suicide. These findings are just as incredible as the Violence Prevention Project Research Center's ability to get them out in a timely manner. But the Violence Prevention Project cannot continue their work without sustained funding. HF 134 will afford Minnesota researchers the ability to research, evaluate, and implement effective gun violence prevention policies like ERPOs and reduce gun violence in the state.

As a gun violence researcher and policy expert, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** committee vote on **HF 134**. The lives of Minnesotans depend on it.

³ Swanson JW, Zeoli AM, Frattaroli S, et al. Suicide Prevention Effects of Extreme Risk Protection Order Laws in Four States. *J Am Acad Psychiatry Law*. 2024;52(3):327-337. Published 2024 Sep 3. doi:10.29158/JAAPL.240056-24

⁴ Wintemute GJ, Pear VA, Schleimer JP, et al. Extreme Risk Protection Orders Intended to Prevent Mass Shootings: A Case Series. *Ann Intern Med*. 2019;171(9):655-658. doi:10.7326/M19-2162

⁵ Densley J, Peterson J. Extreme Risk Protection Orders (red flag laws) in Minnesota: A year of evidence-based prevention. *Star Tribune*. February 15, 2025. <https://www.startribune.com/extreme-risk-protection-orders-red-flag-laws-in-minnesota-a-year-of-evidence-based-prevention/601223451>. Accessed March 28, 2025.