

Firearm Suicide Prevention

Background

Suicide by firearms is the number one cause of gun deaths in the United States, making up almost two-thirds of total gun deaths. Of total suicides, almost half are committed using firearms. Firearm suicides are an epidemic, and the most effective policies aim to reduce firearm suicides primarily through enculturation of mental health destigmatization and collaborative practices for suicide prevention within the gun community. Such enculturation requires the collaboration of public health experts and health care practitioners, with stakeholders in the gun community, such as FFLs, firearms trainers, gun clubs and ranges, and gun rights organizations.

About the Policy

The policy is based on the principle that by facilitating voluntary gun transfers for people in crisis, encouraging further collaboration between health care providers and the gun community, and educating the public about resources available to those in crisis, we could significantly reduce firearm suicides.

Protection of Gun Rights

This policy would legalize and facilitate voluntary firearm transfers, allowing a gun owner who feels they are at risk of self-harm, or who temporarily has a minor in the home whom they feel would be made less safe around a firearm, to temporarily transfer their firearms to a nonprohibited trusted individual, or to a club or organization that is legally allowed to receive guns for safekeeping. Waiting periods, transfer fees, and transport restrictions would be suspended in the case of such a transfer.

The policy calls for the state to build a publicly available, interactive map of federal Firearms Licensed Dealers, gun clubs, and other organizations legally allowed to receive guns who have indicated a willingness to store them for safekeeping in the event of a temporary voluntary transfer. Such entities and organizations will be eligible for a tax deduction for firearm storage costs incurred.

Protection of Public Health

This policy adds substantial new gun violence prevention protections at the state level through a novel focus on preventing firearm suicide that extends beyond simply the use of extreme risk protection orders or sales restrictions. The policy implements firearm suicide prevention education and awareness programs through multiple stakeholders and calls for

the distribution of informational materials and resources at the point of sale. It also contains a completely novel approach to firearm suicide prevention- allowing for the voluntary transfer of guns out of the hands of people who are at risk of self-harm- suspending certain bureaucratic barriers while still maintaining key safeguards. For example, there is a key provision prohibiting the party storing the firearms for the duration of a temporary emergency transfer from utilizing said firearms during that period, so as to prevent those who seek to utilize this policy to conduct permanent transfers while evading the background checks process, from doing so.

Consent Tally

This proposal received the unanimous consent of all 23 panelists.