

Title: Implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders in Colorado from 2020-2022: Firearm Relinquishment and Return and Petitioner Characteristics

Authors: Leslie M Barnard, MPH, Nisha Batta, MS, Megan McCarthy, Kimberly Thies, Caitlin Robinson, Marian E Betz, MD, MPH, Christopher E Knoepke, PhD, MSW

Introduction: Firearm injury and death remains a strong public health concern, with nearly 50,000 firearm-related deaths in the United States (US) in 2021. Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) are civil restraining orders that intend to reduce firearm deaths by temporarily removing firearms from individuals who are threatening violence against themselves or others. The present study aims to evaluate firearm relinquishment and petitioner characteristics among ERPOs filed and granted in Colorado.

Methods: All ERPO petitions filed in Colorado (1/1/2020-12/31/2022) were analyzed using an established abstraction tool and standardized team-based approach. Case data abstracted from petitions and court documents were analyzed descriptively.

Results: Over three years, there were 353 ERPO petitions filed in Colorado. Only 39% percent of granted petitions had documentation of firearms being relinquished. The average number firearms relinquished was 1.8 with a range of 1 to 31 firearms. One third (37.7%) of petitions mentioned a mental health issue, 10% had a renewal request, and half (54.6%) of petitions were filed by law enforcement (LE). LE petitions filed were more likely to be granted temporary ERPOs (94.3% vs. 35.0%, $p < .0001$) and full year ERPOs (79.7% vs. 39.3%, $p < .0001$).

Conclusion: Results from these analyses shed light on data gaps surrounding ERPO use and implementation. Differences in LE versus non-LE filed petition outcomes and documentation suggest a need for additional research and training/education among the public on ERPO filing. The efficacy of ERPOs hinges on removing firearms from those at risk. A lack of documentation on firearm relinquishment limits the present study's ability to evaluate ERPOs and their efficacy. This suggests a need to standardize the process for reporting and collecting petitions to ensure ERPO utilization and impact can be properly evaluated.

Keywords: Firearm, Injury, Extreme Risk Protection Order