

TO: The Honorable Senator Ron Latz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Clare Oumou Verbeten, Vice Chair
Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

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

DATE: February 28, 2025

RE: **SF 1580 – 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 also 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 SF 1580 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. 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. 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 found that [one suicide was prevented for every 17 to 23 ERPOs issued](#). 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.

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. 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. SF 1580 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 **SF 1580**. The lives of Minnesotans depend on it.