



Photo: Martin Spiske on Unsplash.

Colorado's Major Steps Forward in Preventing Gun Violence Working within the Systems of Democracy

Friday, Governor Polis signed into law a bill prohibiting the sale, transfer and possession of unserialized firearms (Ghost Guns). With this, we celebrate the enactment of six new laws addressing the gun violence issue:

- Requiring a minimum age of 21 to purchase a firearm – either long gun or handgun
- Requiring a waiting period of 3 days for the transfer of a firearm
- Repealing the gun industry immunity from liability and creating a cause of action
- Expanding the Extreme Risk Protection Order list of petitioners
- Requiring municipal courts to follow the procedures of district and county courts with regard to domestic violence cases – which includes firearms relinquishment
- Prohibiting the sale of ghost guns – unserialized firearms and principal components – and making the possession of machine gun converter devices illegal.

Although several of our supported bills failed during the session, we in the Colorado gun violence prevention community know nothing is a slam dunk and take much pride in these advances made in protecting public safety

As a western state, Colorado's progress on gun violence prevention has been quite remarkable. In 2000, following the Columbine Massacre, voters approved Closing the Gun Show Loophole by an astounding 70% - 30% margin – illustrating that the Colorado General Assembly, which had killed a comparable bill, was totally out of step with the people. In 2013 following the Aurora Theater and Sandy Hook massacres, five new laws were enacted, including universal background checks and a ban on large capacity magazines. In 2019 Colorado enacted an Extreme Risk Protection Orders law (red flag), and six significant gun

violence prevention proposals in 2021, including Safe Storage, repeal of preemption and prohibiting violent misdemeanants from buying guns.

Since 2012, nearly twenty proposals have been enacted to strengthen Colorado's gun laws. Ceasefire has been involved in these efforts, frequently as an initiator. There is still much more to be done, and we at Ceasefire are already working on proposals for the 2024 session.

You may have heard that a national group (Here 4 the Kids) is coming to Colorado to hold a protest on gun violence on the capitol grounds today. We have been asked by some of you whether we will be participating in this sit-in. We were not approached by the organizers, so although we have share with the organizers their anguish at the toll of gun violence and their wish for our children's safety, Ceasefire is not participating. Their only stated goal is to coerce Governor Polis into signing an executive order banning all firearms and holding a mandatory buyback. [The Governor of Colorado does not have this power.](#) We should be glad of this, for if a Governor or a President had such sweeping powers, we would not be living in a democracy, but rather a dictatorship.

Ceasefire celebrates democracy, even with all its frustrating flaws. We have, and always will, continue to work within the democratic framework.

Winston Churchill: Democracy is the worst form of government
– except for all the others.

ACTION: Please send an email or letter to thank Governor Polis for signing all the gun bills this year. Email: Governorpolis@state.co.us or letter: Governor Polis, Colorado State Capitol, 200 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, Colorado 80203

Gun Violence Awareness Day



Gov. Polis signs Ghost Guns bill. Photo: Colorado Ceasefire

Friday, Governor Polis also signed a proclamation declaring June 2 as Gun Violence Awareness Day in Colorado. Across the nation people were wearing orange to remember the life of Hadiya Pendleton, who was murdered in Chicago only days after marching in Obama's 2nd Inaugural Parade. Her friends began this remembrance of Hadiya and all victims of gun violence, recognizing that orange is the color of hunters and the signal to "Don't Shoot."

As Senator Tom Sullivan asked at that signing, "Wouldn't it be great if the Denver Nuggets wore orange ribbons in their championship contest?" Sullivan is the champion in our mutual cause, having been brought to it by the murder of his son Alex in the Aurora Theater.

Americans Believe Mass Shootings are a Crisis

A poll by Navigator Research found that 74% of Americans polled say that gun violence is a crisis or is a major issue, an increase of 8% in just two months. 91% of Democrats felt that, as well as 59% of Republicans. Even 64% of gun-owning households believe we are in crisis or that it is a major issue.

The data were even stronger on the question of mass shootings as a crisis: 80% indicated mass shootings are a crisis or major issue, which included 90% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans.

Furthermore, 63% of those polled felt that gun laws should be stronger (88% of Democrats, 55% of Independents, and 38% of Republicans) with 67% saying Congress has not done enough.

Support for several policies polled of interest:

- Combating gun trafficking: 87%
- Requiring a license to purchase a gun: 78%
- Holding gun owners accountable for gun accessibility to dangerous individuals: 79%
- Requiring mandatory gun safety training for gun owners: 83%
- Banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines: 67%

Good Reads

Raw Tools - Guns to Gardens

[The Colorado Sun tells the story of Raw Tools](#) and their gun buy back efforts and “beating swords into plowshares” by making garden tools from relinquished firearms.

There will be a gun buyback on **June 10th at Cure D’Ars Catholic Church at 3201 Dahlia St., Denver from 10 a.m. to noon.** No reservations needed. Arrive with firearms unloaded and in your trunk. Remain in your vehicle. Learn more at www.gunstogardensdenver.org

Dave Matthews on Gun Violence

“No one is coming for your guns.” [Rock musician Dave Matthews expressed his frustration with politicians who](#) are unwilling to sit down and address problems with guns. He shares his angst in a new song “Madman’s Eye’s,” which contains the lyrics:
*Oh, we live as if our hands are tied.
Is it really so hard to do what we know is right?
To protect the things that we hold dear.*

Fareed Zakaria on Why the U.S. has so many Gun Deaths

Unfortunately, Zakaria poses the question, but doesn’t really answer it. In the Washington Post (may be behind a pay wall), [Zakaria compares U.S. gun deaths with other developed](#)

[nations](#). Our rate of gun homicides is 100 times that of the United Kingdom, from which these United States sprang forth. Britons passed strong gun laws following the mass shooting at an elementary school in Dunblane, Scotland. Gun homicides and suicides decreased dramatically. Australia did similarly after the Port Arthur massacre. It is easily demonstrated that states that have stronger gun laws, have fewer gun deaths. But those who oppose stronger gun laws, claim it is all about mental health. He then questions that since Texas has a gun fatality rate 3 times that of New York, are we to conclude that the residents of Texas have 3 times the rate of mental illness (Don't answer that!)?

E.J. Dionne: Gun Rights Absolutists and Democracy

Also in the Washington Post (may be behind a paywall), [E.J. Dionne contends that pro-gun-rights activists](#) have given up on democracy because they are losing. He reported that at the NRA convention conservative politicians spoke of nonsensical philosophies – “based on the idea that the national addiction to high-powered weaponry has nothing to do with America’s unique mass shooting problems – speaks to a deep ailment in our democracy.” He gives as an example the expulsion of two Tennessee legislators for protesting inaction after a Nashville school mass shooting. Dionne notes recent efforts to prevent people from having a voice in their democracy, and the evolution of the NRA since 1934, when it helped draft the National Firearms Act to today’s absolutist organization.

Nicholas Kristof: Guns in the Home

In the New York Times (may be behind a paywall), [Nicholas Kristof suggests that we are caught in a vicious spiral](#) where people buy guns out of fear, which creates more gun violence, and more fear, and more guns. He recounts the troubling shootings of young people who made the mistake of showing up at the wrong house. He notes that researchers have found repeatedly that a gun in the home makes people more likely to be murdered, and cites a [2022 study in the Annals of Internal Medicine](#). Now gun violence is the leading cause of death for children and teenagers. Dionne concludes “If we only loved our children as much as we love our guns.”

Fear Sells Guns: Firearm Classes

In an op-ed in the New York Times (may be behind paywall), [Harel Shapira, a Texas professor of sociology, recounts her experiences](#) in taking over 40 firearms training classes. She observed a commonality in all classes is that they stress that you need to fear that your life is in constant danger and to be prepared to shoot without hesitation.

Watch and Listen

Guns in Cars: Fox 31 New in Denver relates [the danger of leaving unlocked guns in your vehicle](#). Denver police indicated 768 guns were stolen from cars last year. Firearms should be unloaded and locked. You can be a contributor to crime if you fail to securely store your firearms.

Bishop Speaks on Gun Violence: Rt Revd Kym Lucan, the Episcopal Bishop of Colorado, [spoke with the British Church Times about gun violence](#) and her experiences at East High School when she was locked down with others following the shooting of two school deans back in March.

Legislative Review: [Ceasefire’s Eileen McCarron was interviewed on KGNU](#) regarding the 2023 legislative session with regard to gun laws.

The Curious Theater in Denver is currently running a powerful one-woman play “On the Exhale” dealing with the after effects of a school shooting on one mother. It is an excellent production and runs through June 10th. For tickets and more information go to: <https://www.curious theatre.org/>

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