In February, the House Judiciary Committee held the first congressional gun safety hearing in over 10 years and the country commemorated the first anniversary of the Parkland massacre.

Gun violence prevention has already featured prominently in the 2019 state and federal legislative cycle. On February 6, a congressional task force led by Representative Mike Thompson (CA-05) held the first gun violence prevention hearing in more than a decade. Activists, survivors, and experts, including Giffords Law Center Executive Director Robyn Thomas, powerfully testified to the toll that gun violence takes and the solutions that can address this crisis.

The following week, Americans commemorated the one-year anniversary of the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018. Though nothing can bring back the 17 students and educators who were killed that day, or the more than 36,000 Americans who are senselessly killed each year by guns, the Parkland shooting sparked a tidal wave of activism in 2018 that resulted in unprecedented state legislative action that has continued into 2019.

Gun safety bills are moving rapidly. Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak signed a background check law. Six gun violence prevention bills are on the governor’s desk in New York. Legislators in New Mexico have passed four bills through their first chamber. Comprehensive reform packages are pending in New Jersey, California, and New Hampshire.

Undoubtedly, the gun violence prevention landscape has changed dramatically since the Parkland tragedy just over a year ago. The incredible courage of the students and the voices of gun violence survivors, activists, and experts will resound throughout 2019 and far into the future to continue this historic progress.

A NEW DAY IN NEW MEXICO
The 2018 midterms shifted the balance of the New Mexico legislature towards gun safety. HB 8 (background checks), HB 87 (domestic violence) and HB 83 (extreme risk protection order) have all passed the house and SB 8 (background checks) has passed the senate. Another three bills that would close background check loopholes, disarm domestic abusers, and make it harder for minors to access guns have passed at least one committee.

PERMITLESS CARRY IN SOUTH DAKOTA
Governor Kristi Noem failed residents of South Dakota by signing a bill to repeal the requirement that people carrying hidden, loaded guns in public must obtain a permit and pass a background check (SB 47). Although a poll showed 84% of residents support the permit and background check law, Governor Noem voted against their safety and in favor of the gun lobby.
EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER
ERPOs provide a process for certain individuals, usually family or law enforcement, to petition for an order to remove firearms from people who may be a danger to themselves or others. Indiana HB 1651 passed the house. New Mexico HB 83 passed the house. Nebraska LB 58 has a hearing on February 28. New Hampshire HB 687 has a hearing scheduled for March 5. Washington SB 5027 passed a committee and SB 5745 has hearings February 19 and 21. ERPO bills are pending in at least 20 states.

BACKGROUND CHECKS
Nevada SB 143 was signed by the governor. New Mexico HB 8 passed the house and SB 8 passed the senate. Illinois HB 888 has a hearing February 19. New Hampshire HB 109 has a hearing February 21. Washington HB 1465 has a hearing February 20. Maryland HB 96 and HB 786 have hearings February 25, SB 346 has a hearing February 21, and SB 737 has a hearing February 27. At least 23 states currently have legislation pending to strengthen or enact background checks.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
New Mexico HB 87 passed the house and SB 328 passed a committee. North Dakota HB 1393 passed the house. Indiana HB 1643 passed a committee. Illinois HB 887 has a hearing February 19. Washington HB 1225 and SB 5143 each passed a committee, and HB 1786 has a hearing scheduled for February 20. At least 18 states have bills pending that would close domestic violence loopholes.

URBAN GUN VIOLENCE
Community-based urban gun violence reduction strategies that focus on identifying individuals at high risk for involvement in shootings have been shown to significantly reduce gun violence in cities. Currently, at least eight states have bills pending that would allocate or protect funding for such programs.

GUN LOBBY BILL
GUNS IN SCHOOLS
Virginia HB 1656 and HB 2721 passed both chambers. Indiana SB 127 passed the senate and HB 1253 passed the house. Florida SB 598 has a hearing February 19. South Dakota SB 122 passed a committee. Montana HB 325 and HB 357 passed a committee. Nebraska LB 343 has a hearing February 28. Maryland HB 1247 has a hearing February 25. Dangerous bills to allow guns in schools are pending in at least 26 states.

PERMITLESS CARRY
Oklahoma HB 2597 passed the house and HB 1142 passed a committee. Virginia SB 1012 passed a committee. There are reckless permitless carry bills pending in at least nine states.

For more information on the firearm bills introduced in this legislative session, or any other questions about Gun Law Trendwatch, contact its author, Allison Anderman, at aanderman@giffords.org.

LAWMAKER? ADVOCATE?
WE’RE HERE TO HELP
Reach out to Giffords Law Center today to find out how you can use our model laws to help craft lifesaving gun legislation in your home state.

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