Vermont was the first state to pass sweeping gun safety reforms after the Parkland shooting. It’s poised to lead again in 2020.

After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School two years ago that claimed 17 lives, Vermont took unprecedented action on gun safety, passing sweeping reforms that enacted universal background checks and an extreme risk protection order law and raised the minimum age to purchase guns in the state. These significant reforms made residents safer from gun violence and raised the state’s grade in Giffords Law Center’s *Annual Gun Law Scorecard* from an F to a C-. Yet Vermont still has work to do—according to the most recent ATF data, it supplies crime guns to other states at the 15th-highest rate.

In 2020, Vermont legislators are once again positioned to lead. HB 610 would prohibit individuals subject to domestic violence protective orders from accessing firearms and would establish a process to swiftly disarm abusers. 75% of Vermont’s intimate partner homicides involve a gun. States that have laws prohibiting protective order respondents from accessing firearms have 13% fewer firearm intimate partner homicides.

HB 610 would also close the Charleston Loophole by prohibiting a dealer from transferring a firearm to a person before a background check has cleared and expand the state’s 2018 extreme risk protection order by allowing family or household members to petition for an order. Nearly 88% of gun deaths in Vermont are suicides. HB 610 would help address this crisis by improving and expanding laws that make it more difficult for individuals at risk of harming themselves or others to access guns.

Vermont, a state that has a higher gun death rate than the national average, has the opportunity to show its residents and the country that states can and must do more to protect Americans.

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GUN SAFETY EXECUTIVE ACTION IN NEW YORK

On January 21, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo introduced his executive budget and, along with it, a package of gun safety bills. These bills would, among other things, further regulate the manufacture and dissemination of untraceable and undetectable guns known as “ghost guns,” make it more difficult for domestic abusers to access guns, improve efforts to trace crime guns, and strengthen efforts to prevent prohibited individuals from acquiring firearms.

ALABAMA LEGISLATORS TRY TO BLOCK LIFESAVING ERPO LAW

Alabama has the second-highest gun death rate in the nation. Reckless legislators introduced HB 123, which would declare extreme risk protection order (ERPO) laws void, make it a felony for an officer to enforce an order, and prohibit the acceptance of any federal grant funding for ERPOs. Kansas, Oklahoma, and Washington have similar dangerous bills pending this session.
GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL
BACKGROUND CHECKS
Washington HB 2467 and HB 2555 passed the house and have hearings February 27. New Hampshire HB 1379 passed the house. Maryland HB 1104 has a hearing March 4. Virginia SB 70 passed a house committee. Legislation to strengthen or enact background checks is pending in 25 states.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL
EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER
New Mexico SB 5 was signed into law by the governor. Washington HB 2622 passed the house and has a hearing February 27. Virginia SB 240 passed a house committee. Extreme risk protection order bills are pending in at least 25 states.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL
COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE
Virginia HB 422 and HB 1499 each passed a senate committee. Washington SB 6288 passed the senate and has hearings February 26 and 28. HB 2325 had a hearing February 24 and has another hearing February 26. SB 6168 had a hearing February 24 and has another hearing February 25. Maryland HB 822 has a hearing February 25. Connecticut HB 5040 has a hearing February 27. Currently, 17 states have bills pending that would allocate or protect funding for such programs.

GUN LOBBY BILL
GUNS IN SCHOOLS
Kentucky SB 8 was enacted February 21. Oklahoma HB 2336 passed both chambers. South Dakota HB 1152 passed the house. Iowa SB 116 passed a committee. Missouri HB 1961 has a hearing February 25. Dangerous bills to allow guns in school or on campus are pending in at least 25 states.

GUN LOBBY BILL
PERMITLESS CARRY
Idaho HB 516 had a hearing February 24. Permitless carry laws allow individuals to carry concealed weapons without a background check and can increase the likelihood of deadly confrontations in public. There are reckless permitless carry bills pending in at least 13 states.

For more information on 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? 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.

GUN LOBBY EXTREMISM OF THE WEEK: SANCTUARIES FOR GUNS—AND GUN VIOLENCE
Legislators in twelve states—including Alabama, Missouri, Mississippi, and West Virginia, which are among the states with the highest gun death rates—introduced bills that would declare their states gun sanctuaries immune from federal guns laws such as those that impose background checks on purchasers.