

GUN LAW TRENDWATCH

A ROUNDUP AND ANALYSIS OF THE LATEST STATE FIREARM LEGISLATION 3.24.2020

COVID-19 leaves children, teens, and young adults exposed to another life-threatening risk: unsecured guns in the home.

As schools, childcare facilities, and colleges and universities across the country close to prevent the spread of COVID-19, millions of American children, teens, and young adults are spending significantly greater periods of time in their homes. Recent data indicate that approximately 4.6 million children and teens in the United States live in homes where loaded guns are kept unsecured.

Unsecured guns are a danger to society generally, but present particular risks for minors and young adults. As discussed in greater detail in a [memo Giffords Law Center released last week](#), the data is clear that by keeping unattended firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition stored separately, gun owners can significantly reduce these risks and save lives.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have enacted a wide range of child access prevention (CAP) laws that impose liability on gun owners who fail to safely store their guns around minors. Bills to create or strengthen laws that keep guns out of the hands of children and teens are currently pending in a total of 17 states. A bill in **Ohio** (HB 240) has passed at least one committee, and **Virginia** HB 600 and SB 593 and **Washington** SB 5434 are on the governors' desks.

It is critically important to pass strong laws that keep guns out of the hands of children and teens. While many legislatures are temporarily out of session due to COVID-19, gun owners can help protect their children by safely storing their firearms. The benefits of safe storage will remain long after this pandemic is over. **This will be our last biweekly Trendwatch until the state legislatures that are currently closed begin to re-open.**

COVID-19 FORCES STATE LEGISLATURES TO CLOSE

As the coronavirus forces the everyday lives of Americans to grind to a halt, state legislatures around the country are closing their doors. As of March 23, approximately 26 states have paused, canceled, or scaled back their 2020 legislative sessions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As many states were nearing the end of their sessions, it is possible that several lifesaving gun violence prevention bills will be held until next year.

MARYLAND CLOSER TO EXPANDING BACKGROUND CHECKS

Maryland lawmakers sent two bills to the governor that would fully close the state's private sale loophole. Currently, private sales of handguns and assault weapons are required to be processed through a dealer but private long gun transactions are subject to little oversight. HB 4 would close this loophole and require all purchases of rifles and shotguns to be processed through a dealer and subject to a background check.

GUN BILLS IN MOTION

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Washington HB 2467 and HB 2555 were enacted on March 18. **Maryland** HB 4 and SB 208 were sent to the governor. **Virginia** HB 2 and SB 70 were sent to the governor. Legislation to strengthen or enact background checks is pending in 22 states.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Washington HB 2473 was enacted March 18 and HB 2622 was sent to the governor. **Utah** HB 403 was sent to the governor. At least 25 states have bills pending that would close domestic violence loopholes that allow abusers to access guns.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL

EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER

Washington HB 2622, a bill to require review hearings to verify that firearms are surrendered when an ERPO is issued, passed concurrence and was sent to the governor. Extreme risk protection order bills are pending in at least 26 states.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION BILL

COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE

Maryland SB 708, **Virginia** HB 1499, and **Washington** SB 6168 and SB 6288 were all sent to the governor. **Minnesota** HB 3360 passed a committee. Currently, 16 states have bills pending that would allocate or protect funding for such programs.

GUN LOBBY BILL

GUNS IN SCHOOLS

Arming teachers and letting the public carry firearms on campuses increases the risk of students being injured by unintentional gunfire. Dangerous bills to allow guns in school or on campus are pending in at least 21 states.

GUN LOBBY BILL

PERMITLESS CARRY

Idaho HB 516 passed both chambers. 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 12 states.

GUN LOBBY BILL

DEFEATED GUN LOBBY BILLS

Bills to put more guns in K-12 schools failed in **California, Indiana, Maryland, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington,** and **West Virginia**. Bills to allow carry on college and university campuses failed in **Florida, Washington,** and **West Virginia**. Bills to allow permitless carry failed in **Virginia** and **Indiana**. So far this year, gun violence prevention advocates have prevented gun lobby backed bills in the above categories from passing in nine 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: MINNESOTA LEGISLATOR WANTS TO BRING BACK JUNK GUNS

Rep. Cal Bahr introduced HB 3846 to repeal the state's ban on junk guns—cheap, easily concealed firearms that are more likely to misfire or malfunction. A study of Maryland's junk gun ban found that it decreased firearm homicides by 8.6%. We must not allow these guns to proliferate at the expense of public safety.

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For over 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence.