



Make It Easier for Health Care Providers To Use CT's New Gun Law

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After the recent tragedies in Uvalde and Buffalo, extreme risk protection orders (ERPO), also known as red flag laws, are back on the public agenda. ERPOs can be implemented by police when there is reason to believe that someone who owns a firearm is at immediate risk to themselves or others. Research suggests that ERPOs **reduce both suicide and homicide**. **There is even preliminary evidence** to suggest that ERPOs can help prevent mass shootings. However, reduction of suicide is the main focus of ERPO laws, given that suicide **represents over half of all deaths** involving a firearm. Due to their lethality, guns are responsible over 50% of suicide deaths despite accounting for only 5% of suicide attempts. Although Connecticut has been a leader in creating policy for the use of ERPOs, potential users such as healthcare providers have been slow to take advantage. Our research suggests some potential changes that could make the policy more effective.

After the tragedy at the **Connecticut Lottery** in 1998 where a lottery worker killed four bosses and himself, Connecticut became the first state in the nation in 1999 to create an ERPO, modeled after domestic violence risk orders. This law required a concerned party to call the police and report that a person is an imminent risk. Police would then investigate and determine whether to remove any firearms from the home.