



Remarks by Mike Heyka, Member of Colorado Gun Owners for Safety

**As delivered before the Colorado House Judiciary Committee
February 21, 2019**

Good afternoon, my name is Mike Heyka. I have lived in Highlands Ranch for nearly 22 years. I want to thank the chairman and members of the committee for allowing me to speak today.

I have owned guns for nearly 50 years and hunting and shooting have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Maintaining that right—the right to own guns—is something I take very seriously, which is why I am also a member of Colorado Gun Owners for Safety. We are a group that unites hunters, sport shooters, and collectors who support responsible gun ownership and commonsense gun laws. As a gun owner, it is obvious to me that the right to own a firearm goes hand in hand with reasonable regulations. This is what makes us responsible gun owners—we respect the Second Amendment while at the same time acknowledging the need for sensible laws that make our communities safer.

That is why we are here today. As Coloradans who are responsible gun owners, we ask you to pass HB 1177, the Extreme Risk Protection Order. As you've heard, this bill creates a mechanism for family members and law enforcement to temporarily remove guns and prevent the purchase of new guns by people who pose a serious risk of hurting themselves or others. This policy has already saved lives in the thirteen states that have put it into practice. In the first three months after Maryland's law went into effect last year, a judge ordered the removal of firearms in 148 out of 302 cases. Four of those involved credible threats made against schools.

I often hear the argument that ANY action to address our epidemic gun violence is "unconstitutional" and goes against the rights of the 2nd Amendment. In the preamble to that same Constitution is the phrase "ensure domestic tranquility". Over the past 50 plus years, since the assassination of Robert Kennedy with a gun, more Americans have died from guns than have died in all the wars the United States has ever engaged in. We have lost far too American lives to wars abroad, and we have lost far too many

American lives to gun violence here in our own country. The Constitution gives us rights AND it gives us responsibility. They are not mutually exclusive.

Temporarily keeping guns out of the hands of people who have been found by a court to pose a significant risk to themselves or others is common sense. Colorado has the opportunity to take action to reduce mass shootings, suicides, and other gun deaths. I am a gun owner, and I am also someone who is deeply troubled about the gun violence tearing apart our families and our communities. As a gun owner and concerned patriotic Coloradan, I urge you to support HB 1177 and help protect Colorado families and communities.

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[Giffords](https://www.giffords.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives from gun violence. Led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, Navy combat veteran and retired NASA astronaut Captain Mark Kelly, Giffords inspires the courage of people from all walks of life to make America safer.