

Rep. Hintz: Republican inaction ignores urgency of gun violence crisis

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MADISON - Today, Democrats joined Governor Tony Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul in supporting a bill authored by Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) that would create Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) in Wisconsin. Extreme risk laws, also known as 'Red Flag' laws, provide families and law enforcement officers with a formal legal process to temporarily reduce an individual's access to firearms if they pose a danger to themselves or others. Despite overwhelming public support in Wisconsin, Republican leadership has indicated they do not think it is necessary to take action on this, or any measure to reduce the risk of gun violence. Assembly Democratic Leader Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released the following statement in support of this legislation:

“What will it take for Republicans in the Legislature to have the courage to do what’s right? The leadership lockdown most of my Republican colleagues are under is unacceptable. We are elected to our positions to take on the pressing issues facing our state,” Rep. Hintz stated. **“Our state government should do everything possible to keep firearms out of the hands of those individuals who are at risk of harming others or harming themselves. Other states have taken action demonstrating they are serious about protecting their citizens. It is unacceptable that Wisconsin Republicans feel there is nothing that needs to be done. Extreme risk protection orders are a common sense, proven way to address gun violence while still respecting due process and 2nd amendment rights.”**

In Wisconsin, the latest Marquette University Law Poll found that ERPO legislation has [81% approval](#). Evidence shows that temporarily removing guns from people in crisis can reduce the risk of firearm suicide. A [recent study](#) by Everytown for Gun Safety found that after Connecticut passed ERPO legislation there was a 14 percent reduction in the state's firearm suicide rate. Similarly, in Indiana in the 10 years after the state passed its Extreme Risk law in 2005, the state's firearm suicide rate decreased by 7.5 percent. The same study found that 51 percent of mass shooters exhibited warning signs or concerning behaviors before their crimes.

“With six months left in the legislative session, there is plenty of time left to act. But this can’t wait. The time is now to schedule a public hearing and demonstrate that we are committed to reducing the risk of gun violence and reducing the number of suicides in Wisconsin. Everyone deserves to live without the fear of gun violence, and leaders at the state and federal level of government absolutely have a role to play in keeping the people in our communities safe. We are not powerless to act. It’s time for Republicans to step up and listen to the people they represent rather than blindly following their leaders who lack the courage to address this issue.”