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Senator Erpenbach Calls on Republicans to Take Action against Gun Violence

MADISON - On October 21, 2019 Governor Tony Evers issued an executive order calling a special session for November 7 on legislation to address gun safety measures. The session was called specifically to deal with Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) and universal background checks. The Governor announced the session because Republicans have spent years dragging their feet on this issue, and refusing to hold public hearings for these common-sense proposals, despite overwhelming support by Wisconsinites.

As November 7 approached, Republicans made it clear that they had no intention on acting on lifesaving legislation. They gave no indication on if they would call session, or when, and instead turned their back on the 80% of Wisconsinites who want gun safety legislation, without giving room for discussion – or democracy- to take place.

“The majority of Wisconsinites are asking us to take action. Yet, Republicans do not have the courage to come to the table and face their constituents,” said Senator Erpenbach. “While my colleagues across the aisle are afraid of their shadow, people across Wisconsin are wondering when and if their own luck will run out. We called upon Republicans to take action to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals, but apparently the NRA speaks louder than the people they are supposed to serve.”

While the vast majority of gun owners are law-abiding citizens, and are responsible with their firearms, our second amendment rights come with responsibility. We need common-sense efforts to reduce gun violence and promote safety within our communities.

The Governor called upon the legislature to act on common-sense proposals that do not impede on any law-abiding citizens’ second amendment rights. In fact, among those who possess a gun in their home, there is overwhelming support for the legislation that the Senate was supposed to take up today.

The legislation to expand background checks would close the loopholes that enable individuals with criminal convictions to purchase a firearm. Currently, private-party transactions do not require background checks under current federal law, which leaves a major gap for dangerous individuals to access weapons. This bill would simply reduce illegal gun sales and transfers.

ERPO legislation provides for a civil process for families, friends, and law enforcement to petition a court, under due process, to temporarily remove firearms from a person who is at risk for harm to themselves or others. In states that have passed ERPO legislation, there has been a reduction in firearm suicide rates.

“This is a public health crisis,” said Senator Erpenbach. “Republicans are insulting the people they serve by spewing lies that there is nothing that can be done. There are gun deaths that are preventable, and it is our job to show up and pass legislation to save those lives.”

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