



REPORT OF INITIAL FINDINGS & WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared for Consideration by the Special Council on Gun Violence

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EXECUTIVE ORDER 2019-06 (REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE)

Signed on August 16, 2019, Executive Order 2019-06 tasks state agencies in the Governor's jurisdiction, including the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), with working together to identify and implement evidence-based initiatives to help address the public health and public safety crisis of gun violence in Pennsylvania.¹

The Order creates new entities within state government to help marshal these efforts, including a new Office of Gun Violence Prevention at PCCD. Executive Order 2019-06 also established an 18-member Special Council on Gun Violence within PCCD that includes members representing public health, public safety, law enforcement, victim services, education, human services, criminal and juvenile justice, research, as well as state and local government. The Special Council is chaired by Special Advisor to the Governor on Gun Violence and PCCD Chairman Charles H. Ramsey.

The Council's responsibilities include:

1. Conducting its first meeting within 60 days of the Executive Order.
2. Adopting a public health and community engagement strategy that includes gun owners, health care professionals, and victims of gun-related incidents, that will provide direction, duties and responsibilities to the newly created Office of Gun Violence Prevention within PCCD.
3. Reviewing current background check processes for firearms purchasers and making recommendations for improvement.
4. Reviewing best practices and making recommendations that keep weapons from dangerous individuals.
5. Identifying and defining strategies across Commonwealth agencies to align resources to reduce gun violence.
6. Providing PCCD and the Senior Advisor for Gun Violence Prevention with recommendations to reduce incidents of community violence, mass shootings, domestic violence, suicide, and accidental shootings in Pennsylvania within 180 days of its initial meeting.

The Council held its first meeting in Harrisburg on October 9, 2019, and formed five Workgroups comprised of more than 80 diverse stakeholders² to examine data, research, and issues related to key focus areas:

1. Reducing Community Gun Violence;
2. Preventing Suicide by Firearms;
3. Combatting Mass Shootings;
4. Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings; and
5. Reducing the Likelihood of Accidental/Unintentional Shootings.

¹ Note: Appendix A includes a copy of the full text of Executive Order 2019-06 for reference.

² A full listing of Workgroup members is on PCCD's [Gun Violence webpage](#).

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUPS

The Governor’s Executive Order asks PCCD and the Special Council to engage a wide array of stakeholders in its efforts to identify best practices and strategies to reduce gun violence in the Commonwealth. To date, PCCD has engaged nearly 600 individuals representing victim services, gun owners, public health, state and local law enforcement, public safety, victims/survivors, advocates, parents and family members, veterans, educators, community leaders, and concerned citizens.

To support its work, the Special Council established five stakeholder Workgroups focused on key areas of gun violence, including mass shootings, accidental/unintentional shootings, suicide by firearms, domestic violence-related shootings, and community gun violence. Each Workgroup held at least three meetings between November 2019 and January 2020 to review available research, data, and information related to their focus area, and to explore potential recommendations to make to the Special Council for consideration.

Between November 15 and December 5, 2019, the Special Council also hosted five public hearings across the Commonwealth to listen and learn from individuals with professional and lived experience and expertise on issues related to gun violence. Nearly 50 individuals provided testimony, and more than 150 participants attended the hearings, which took place in Dallas, Pittsburgh, York, State College, and Philadelphia.

Finally, PCCD conducted targeted outreach efforts for specific groups identified within the Executive Order, including gun owners, victims/survivors, and local law enforcement to ensure these perspectives are well-representing in the initial findings and recommendations presented to the Special Council for consideration.

Reducing Likelihood of Accidental Shootings Workgroup & Public Hearing

The Reducing the Likelihood of Accidental Shootings Workgroup was comprised of 14 members and met three times between November 2019 and January 2020. The Workgroup explored data and research related to contributing factors of unintentional injuries and deaths related to firearms, including education and training on safe storage and handling practices as well as firearm safety devices like locks, cases, and other tools to prevent unauthorized access. Much of the discussion focused on preventing access to firearms for children and youth, including considering outcomes from states’ implementation of Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws and other safe storage requirements, including potential unintended consequences.

On November 15, 2019, the Special Council on Gun Violence hosted a public hearing focused on “Reducing the Likelihood of Accidental Shootings” at Misericordia University in Dallas, PA. Members of the Special Council and related Workgroup, as well as audience members, heard testimony from individuals representing public health, first responders, law enforcement, and firearm safety trainers regarding the prevalence of unintentional shootings in the Commonwealth, underlying risk factors, and best practices (i.e., safe storage).

Reducing Community Gun Violence Workgroup & Public Hearing

The Reducing Community Gun Violence Workgroup was comprised of 16 members and met four times between November 2019 and January 2020. The Workgroup explored promising practices and community-led partnerships between law enforcement, community-based organizations, victim service agencies, justice agencies, and education institutions to prevent and disrupt systemic patterns of violence.

On December 5, 2019, the Special Council hosted a public hearing focused on “Reducing Community Gun Violence” at Temple University’s School of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. Representatives from non-profit community outreach programs, victim service providers, researchers, law enforcement, and faith-based organizations provided remarks to the Council on supporting survivors and victims of gun violence, community gun violence’s impacts on children and youth, research-based perspectives, public safety and law enforcement strategies, community-based approaches to reducing gun violence, and the role of faith-based organizations in preventing and responding to violence.

Preventing Suicide by Firearms Workgroup & Public Hearing

The Preventing Suicide by Firearms Workgroup included 18 members representing research institutions, statewide and local coalitions and nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and lawmakers. The Workgroup met three times and examined available research and data on evidence-based suicide prevention, intervention, and recovery. The Workgroup also interfaced with members of the Pennsylvania Suicide Prevention Task Force, established in May 2019 by Governor Wolf to develop a four-year statewide suicide prevention plan for the Commonwealth.

On November 22, 2019, the Special Council on Gun Violence hosted a public hearing focused on “Preventing Suicide by Firearms” at York City School District’s Administration Building in York, PA. Members of the Special Council and related Workgroup, as well as audience members, heard testimony from individuals representing the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of the Attorney General, Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, medical service providers, researchers, and CeaseFire Pennsylvania on indicators of risk and resilience in youth, the Commonwealth’s suicide prevention efforts, and proposed and enacted extreme risk protection order (ERPO) laws.

Combatting Mass Shootings Workgroup & Public Hearing

The Combatting Mass Shootings Workgroup’s 19 members met four times and looked at issues related to multiple-victim incidents, including the definition of “mass shootings,” evidence-based prevention efforts, enhancing coordination and capacity of public safety and public health systems to respond to mass casualty events, and understanding the extent to which mental health and behavioral health issues do or do not contribute to mass violence.

On November 21, 2019, the Special Council on Gun Violence hosted a public hearing focused on “Combatting Mass Shootings” at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA. Members of the Special Council and related Workgroup, as well as audience members, heard testimony from individuals representing the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Office of the Attorney General, Pennsylvania State Police, medical care providers, victim service and crisis solution providers, survivors/victims, and local law enforcement regarding identifying threats and responding to incidents, the immediate and long-term impacts and recovery process for individuals and communities, and supporting survivors/victims.

Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings Workgroup & Public Hearing

The Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings Workgroup reviewed available research and data, and explored issues like the definition of “domestic violence,” data gaps related to children/youth and other vulnerable populations, outcomes from police departments participating in the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), and early lessons from statewide implementation of [Act 79 of 2018](#).

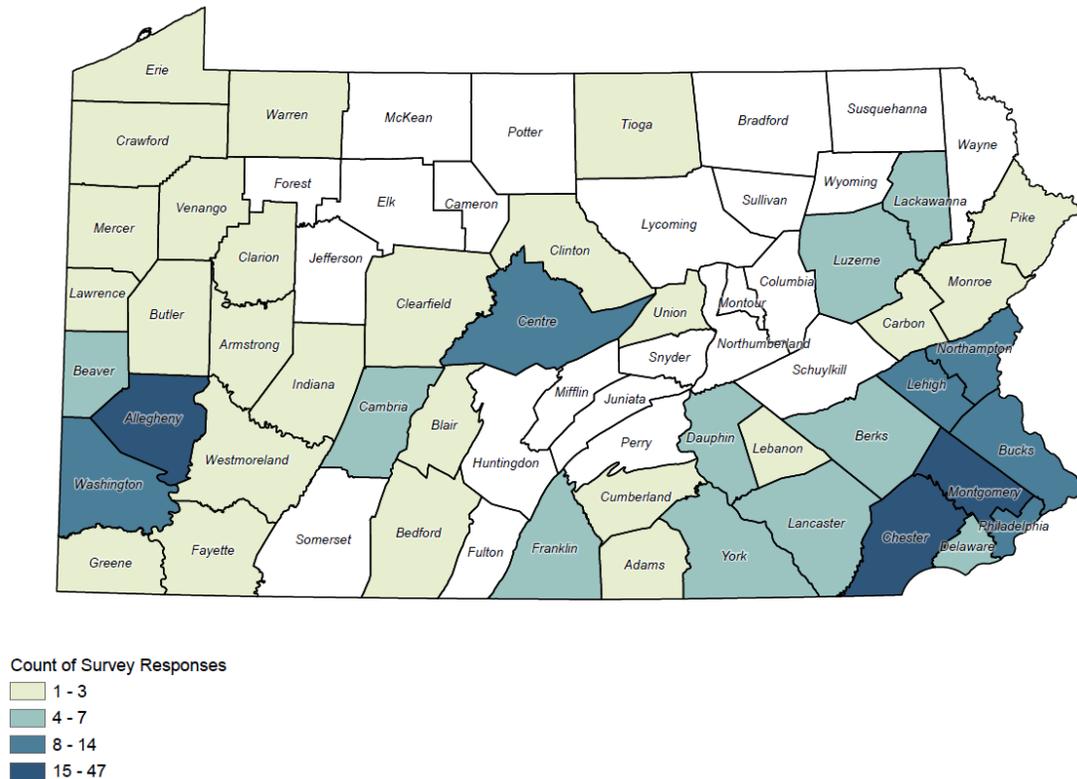
On November 25, 2019, the Special Council on Gun Violence hosted a public hearing focused on “Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings” at the Pennsylvania State University in State College,

PA. Members of the Special Council and related Workgroup, as well as audience members, heard testimony from representatives from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, and sheriffs. Testimony focused on victim-centered prevention and response strategies, as well as perspectives from Pennsylvania criminal justice and law enforcement agencies.

OTHER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to gathering input from stakeholders through Workgroups and testimony at public hearings, PCCD also developed a [Gun Violence webpage](#) and an Online Public Comment Survey where individuals can learn more about the Special Council’s work, as well as share their thoughts and perspectives with members of the Council. PCCD received public comments from more than 320 Pennsylvanians from 44 counties through an online survey that was developed and launched in November 2019.

SCGV Online Public Comment Survey Responses by County



The majority of survey respondents self-identified as white (81.1 percent), male (76.7 percent), and gun owners (61.4 percent). Many respondents implored state leaders to increase enforcement of existing laws rather than institute new policies that create a burden for lawful gun owners. Several noted the constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms and questioned the legitimacy of any efforts to regulate or restrict firearm ownership or use. Many called for increased open or concealed carry as a potential deterrent for mass shootings, citing examples of citizen-interrupted active shooting incidents.

Several others expressed support for what they called “common sense” provisions, like expanding background checks by closing current loopholes, establishing waiting periods for firearm purchases, and implementing Extreme Risk Protection Orders (also known as “red flag” laws). Others called for increased emphasis on firearm safety education and training to reduce injuries and fatalities related to unintentional shootings.

Many noted the need to address all forms of violence and root causes. A significant portion of respondents also called on the state to significantly increase investments in mental health services in communities across Pennsylvania.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on feedback from stakeholders as well as deliberations from Workgroup members, the following preliminary recommendations are presented to the Special Council on Gun Violence for consideration as it works to develop a final report of findings and recommendations to submit to the Commission and Governor in early March 2020.

CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS AND WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Prevention

1. Invest in expanded access to evidence-informed primary prevention programs, social emotional learning, conflict resolution skill development, and other initiatives that build resiliency and protective factors for individuals, families, and communities.

Reporting of Lost/Stolen Firearms

2. Require the reporting of lost/stolen firearms to law enforcement to deter illegal gun trafficking, with care to include provisions for amnesty or immunity from prosecution to encourage reporting.

Firearm Safety Education, Awareness, and Training

3. Promote more evidence-informed firearm safety education, awareness, and training programs for adults, especially those with children, including those provided in partnership with local law enforcement, gun shops/ranges, and community organizations.

Safe Storage/Child Access Prevention (CAP)

4. The Commonwealth should explore enacting legislation and support other evidence-informed strategies to improve safe handling and storage of firearms.

Mental Health

5. Increase investments in mental health and other healthcare services to promote equitable access to critical care for all Pennsylvanians.
6. Build resiliency and wellness among professionals working in public health, public safety, law enforcement, and justice systems by reducing stigma related to mental health in the first responder community and expanding access to treatment and supports.

Healing Centered Engagement/Trauma-Informed Approaches

7. The Commonwealth should support healing centered engagement (also known as trauma-informed approaches) as a model for supporting individuals and communities who have experienced trauma and violence, including gun violence.

Threat Assessment and Management

8. Increase use of threat assessment and management practices to identify and mitigate risks in communities.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

9. Support legislation that expands Pennsylvania’s current background check requirements to include long guns and private sales/transfers using the same timely process currently in place through PICS.
10. Close the “boyfriend loophole” by advocating for reforms at the federal and state levels, including supporting reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and proposed provisions that would extend existing firearm restrictions to include current and former dating partners convicted of abuse or stalking charges and develop recommendations to strengthen Pennsylvania’s existing laws.³
11. Amend Pennsylvania’s Mental Health Procedures Act (MHPA) to close loopholes in current background check processes and require immediate electronic reporting of involuntary mental health commitments to law enforcement (instead of the current 7-day window).

KEEPING WEAPONS FROM DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS

12. Explore implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), which allow a petition to a court for the temporary removal of access to firearms in cases where an individual poses a risk of hurting themselves or others.
13. Develop temporary and voluntary safe, off-site firearm storage options for gun owners, including during times of crisis.

CROSS-AGENCY ALIGNMENT

14. To promote better coordination between public health and public safety, significantly increase investments in enhanced data collection and reporting as well as data analysis and research focused on firearm-related injuries/fatalities and crimes.
15. Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered approach.

REDUCING COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE

16. To address resource disparities and gaps, the Commonwealth should explore strategies to increase investments in community-led efforts to address gun violence, such as expanding voluntary payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements and/or requiring academic research institutions to provide funding/research support as part of their non-profit/tax exempt status.
17. Provide additional training for professionals in public safety, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems on best practices to build trust and promote better accountability between law enforcement and the community.
18. Identify and support evidence-informed programs that build trust between police and the communities they serve (i.e., Youth Law Enforcement Forum, community-oriented policing, etc.).

³ 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 6105(c)(6); 23 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 6102.

19. Explore strategies to reduce the number of unsolved homicides by firearms in the Commonwealth.
20. State and local law enforcement agencies should work together to identify effective and practical strategies for addressing illegal guns and preventing firearm-related crime.
21. Identify strategies and interventions to ensure safe routes to and from school for youth in areas with high rates of gun violence, including safe transportation options.
22. Support community-led efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence, including partnerships between faith-based organizations, healthcare practitioners, educators, community leaders, youth, activists, and grassroots organizations.
23. Focus on primary violence prevention by exploring more ways to remove barriers to education, training, and employment and creating opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage.
24. Promote and increase investments in youth engagement as a violence prevention and intervention strategy and create safe places – both online and in communities – to foster resilience among at-risk youth by providing increased funding and resources for neighborhoods and communities.

PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED SHOOTINGS

25. Examine impact and implementation of Act 79 of 2018, which established new requirements and procedures for firearm relinquishment in cases of final protection-from-abuse (PFA) orders and conviction of the misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.
26. Explore the possibility of establishing a criminal definition of “domestic violence” in Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) to promote more consistent sentencing of incidents, as well as determine potential unintended consequences, such as dual arrests.
27. Reinstate Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews for domestic violence homicides and near homicides in every county in Pennsylvania through legislation.
28. Provide increased incentives and resources to support initial and ongoing high-quality professional education opportunities to law enforcement officers and agencies and justice practitioners and systems on how to identify domestic violence and intimate partner violence cases and interact with victims/survivors (i.e., training programs, roll-call trainings, brochures, etc.).
29. Increase opportunities for initial and ongoing training for healthcare practitioners and first responders on trauma-informed approaches to interacting with domestic violence and intimate partner violence victims/survivors, including training on talking with patients and clients about access to firearms as part of discussions about risk and safety.
30. Integrate training and education around impacts of domestic violence, including domestic violence-related shootings, on children and youth within professional development programs for school-based and youth-serving professionals and elevate the importance of social workers and mental health supports within school settings to identify and address impacts of trauma.
31. Identify strategies to promote more consistent reporting mechanisms and procedures for law enforcement agencies for domestic violence-related incidents and/or patterns of escalation (e.g.,

stalking, harassment). For example, consider methods of capturing and analyzing first responder calls and responses, not just arrests.

32. Create a framework for evidence-informed domestic violence programming innovations to test and replicate model programs being implemented in other states.
33. Provide families and individual survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence with necessary and comprehensive support services to mitigate the impacts of trauma and prevent further violence.
34. Expand access to protections and safety measures for victims/survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence by increasing the number and availability of PFA attorneys and free legal services in communities across Pennsylvania.
35. Support voluntary statewide deployment/adoption of and fidelity to the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) model by counties and the Pennsylvania State Police.

PREVENTING SUICIDE BY FIREARMS

36. Explore potential amendments to MHPA and the Uniform Firearms Act regarding firearm prohibitions for individuals with involuntary mental health commitments to address concerns related to unintended consequences e.g., individuals not seeking mental health treatment because of concerns over losing their right to own firearms; the cost or burden of current processes for expungement and restoration of rights being prohibitive.).
37. Consider legislation to establish waiting periods for purchasing firearms from licensed dealers, as well as other policies that aim to reduce access to lethal means.
38. Support development of post-discharge protocols in hospitals and emergency departments that improve access to services and transition plans for individuals who have attempted suicide, including attempted suicide by firearms.
39. Allocate more resources for evidence-informed suicide prevention programs as well as mental health and counseling services for youth.
40. To reduce chances of schools and organizations selecting ineffective training programs, create a process for monitoring and evaluation that ensures quality of suicide prevention trainers and training organizations.
41. The Commonwealth should develop and launch a comprehensive suicide prevention campaign that promotes evidence-informed strategies to reduce access to lethal means specifically focused on preventing suicide by firearms.
42. Provide training and technical assistance to healthcare providers and first responders to increase utilization of evidence-informed strategies to promote lethal means reduction.
43. Expand Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement agencies and justice practitioners to improve interactions with people experiencing mental health episodes or disabilities, as well as promote training on reduction of force techniques, particularly in cases involving a firearm or “suicide by police officer” attempts.

44. Build more impactful collaboration between suicide prevention community groups, “natural listeners” (bartenders, beauticians, barber shops), research institutions, veterans’ groups, schools, healthcare organizations, and other entities.

REDUCING LIKELIHOOD OF ACCIDENTAL/UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTINGS

45. Analyze implementation and outcomes of state laws that enhance licensing and requirements for firearm ownership and concealed carry permits (e.g., minimum age, training or demonstration of skills).
46. Increase the emphasis on creating child-safe homes through early education and awareness for providers and parents/guardians, from pre-natal through adulthood, on the importance of safe storage practices and availability of safety training.
47. Address the biggest barriers to safe firearm storage, such as cost, ease of use, training and education, by supporting gunlock giveaways and offsetting costs of gun storage devices and safety training.

COMBATTING MASS SHOOTINGS

48. Adopt an official statewide position that mass shooters’ names will not be released unless public safety reasons or other relevant situations require it (e.g., shooter is still at large).
49. Include mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incidents in emergency management plans for congregate care settings, such as education institutions and healthcare facilities.
50. Expand the availability of free safety and security assessments through the Pennsylvania State Police Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) program.
51. Promote proactive planning, coordination, resource mapping, and training to improve timely response by first responders and community members and provide more centralized and coordinated services for individuals affected by mass shootings and other events.
52. Ensure all victims/survivors of mass shootings and other forms of gun violence have timely access to necessary care and support, including financial resources, and identify gaps in existing federal and state funding sources to address insurance-related challenges.

INITIAL FINDINGS, WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS

1. Cross-Cutting Findings and Workgroup Recommendations

Over the course of their deliberations, several recommendations for the Special Council were identified that cut across multiple Workgroups. These “cross-cutting” findings and recommendations fell into the following categories:

- Prevention
- Reporting of Lost/Stolen Firearms
- Firearm Safety Education, Awareness, and Training
- Safe Storage/Child Access Prevention (CAP)
- Mental Health
- Healing Centered Engagement/Trauma-Informed Approaches
- Threat Assessment and Management

Prevention

In nearly every Workgroup’s discussions, increasing and sustaining investments in early, upstream prevention efforts emerged as a priority.

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

1. Recommendation: Invest in expanded access to evidence-informed primary prevention programs, social emotional learning, conflict resolution skill development, and other initiatives that build resiliency and protective factors for individuals, families, and communities.

- a. Increase state funding for evidence-informed prevention programs, such as those supported through PCCD’s Violence and Delinquency Prevention Program (VDPP).
- b. The Pennsylvania State Board of Education should adopt Social-Emotional Learning Standards for public K-12 schools based on the voluntary framework that has been adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).
- c. Expand availability of peer mediation programs that enhance conflict resolution skills in youth and adults.
- d. Recognizing the importance of primary prevention to reduce rates of domestic violence-related shootings, the Commonwealth should advocate for and secure increased and sustained long-term funding to support evidence-informed strategies that use a public health approach to prevent escalation to firearm-related domestic violence and intimate partner violence.
- e. Expand access to evidence-informed primary prevention programming such as CDC vetted models, Coaching Boys into Men and others, that can improve the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

Reporting of Lost/Stolen Firearms

While the exact number of firearms lost or stolen from private citizens is not available, recently published data from the National Crime Information Center at the FBI suggests an estimated 238,000 firearms were reported stolen in the U.S. in 2016 – a significant increase (73%) from 2005.⁴ One study used national survey data to estimate that 2.4% of American gun owners had at least one firearm stolen in the past five years, suggesting approximately 380,000 guns are stolen annually.⁵

Data collected by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) indicates 16,256 firearms were reported lost or stolen by federally licensed firearm dealers in 2018, including 409 firearms reported lost/stolen in Pennsylvania.⁶ An estimated 43,768 firearms were stolen in the Commonwealth from 2012 through 2017 from both individual firearm owners as well as dealers.⁷

No requirements currently exist at the federal level or in Pennsylvania state law for individual firearm owners to report to law enforcement that a firearm has been lost or stolen. In an effort to increase safe storage practices and help prevent gun trafficking and straw purchases as well as prevent prohibited possessors from accessing firearms, 11 states and the District of Columbia have adopted laws requiring gun owners to report lost or stolen firearms.^{8,9}

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

2. Recommendation: Require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms to law enforcement to deter illegal gun trafficking, with care to include provisions for amnesty or immunity from prosecution to encourage reporting.

- a. PCCD should work with key stakeholder groups, including law enforcement and firearm owners and dealers, to develop draft legislative language that includes provisions providing amnesty or immunity from prosecution for reporting lost or stolen firearms for consideration by the General Assembly.

Firearm Safety Education, Awareness and Training

Multiple Workgroups elevated the need for increased firearm safety education, awareness and training to reduce rates of firearm-related injuries and fatalities. Testimony provided during the “Reducing Likelihood of Accidental Shootings” public hearing in Dallas, PA, on November 15, 2019 emphasized the impact of training and education on declining rates of unintentional injuries and fatalities involving firearms nationally.¹⁰ Many testifiers also pointed to the benefits of firearm safety education through the

⁴ Brian Freskos, [“Missing Pieces: Gun theft from legal owners is on the rise, quietly fueling violent crime across America,”](#) *The Trace*, November 20, 2017.

⁵ Hemenway, D., Azrael, D. & Miller, M. [Whose guns are stolen? The epidemiology of Gun theft victims.](#) *Inj. Epidemiol.* 4, 11 (2017) doi:10.1186/s40621-017-0109-8,

⁶ [Federal Firearms Licensee \(FFL\) Theft/Loss Report](#), 2014-2018, ATF, accessed 12/19/2019.

⁷ [Pennsylvania Gun Violence](#), Center for American Progress, November 2019.

⁸ Andrew Morral et al, “Lost or Stolen Firearm Reporting Requirements,” *The Science of Gun Policy*, RAND Corporation, August 2018.

⁹ [Reporting Lost & Stolen Guns](#), Giffords Law Center, accessed 12/28/2019. Please see Appendix for a summary of enacted state laws.

¹⁰ *Firearms-Related Accident Statistics: Highlighting Trends in the United States*, National Shooting Sports Foundation, testimony submitted to the Special Council on Gun Violence, November 15, 2019.

Pennsylvania Game Commission’s hunter education training programs; since its inception in 1959, the number of hunting-related shooting incidents in Pennsylvania has declined by nearly 80%.¹¹

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

3. Recommendation: Promote more evidence-informed firearm safety education, awareness, and training programs for adults, especially those with children, including those provided in partnership with local law enforcement, gun shops/ranges, and community organizations.

- a. Use the nationally recognized “Gun Shop Project” model¹² to partner with gun shops/ranges to provide information related to suicide prevention, including the National Suicide Prevention Helpline phone number, as part of firearm transactions. Materials could be placed inside the gun locks that are already shared as part of firearm purchases.
- b. Identify standards/core competencies for firearm safety training using available research and data and develop a program that is adaptable for different delivery contexts (rural vs. urban) and that considers different motivations for firearm ownership (self-defense, recreation/sport, etc.).
- c. Explore minimum standards/options, developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders (gun shop owners, gun owners, community groups, law enforcement, etc.) for point-of-sale education and training for firearm purchases involving a background check as well as license to carry applications on:
 - i. Legal rights and requirements of firearm ownership;
 - ii. Preventing the gun from entering into the criminal market;
 - iii. Safe use and storage of firearms;
 - iv. Identifying and addressing warning signs or risks, including steps to prevent suicide by firearms as well as accidental shootings; and
 - v. How to report concerns and potential dangers through *See Something, Send Something*;
 - vi. Other relevant information identified by stakeholders.
- d. Support local and statewide efforts to expand training and education opportunities to promote safe firearm handling and storage practices, including development and dissemination of resources and materials that reflect diverse audiences and are tailored to specific perspectives in a variety of settings (courthouses, community centers, etc).
- e. The Commonwealth should develop and offer culturally competent and trauma-informed firearm safety educational/awareness materials for doctors, hospitals, emergency rooms, state health centers, and urgent care centers to distribute or reference when responding to accidental/unintentional shooting incidents.
- f. Encourage the development of an online repository of available resources related to safe storage and handling of firearms, such as certified/accredited firearm safety training instructors, safety education programs, and other information.

¹¹ [Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents](#), Pennsylvania Game Commission.

¹² [Gun Shop Project](#), Harvard University School of Public Health, Means Matter, access January 18, 2020.

- g. Increase investments in research to determine efficacy of specific firearm safety education and training programs.

Safe Storage and Child Access Prevention (CAP)

Research suggests that more than half of gun owners in the U.S. store at least one firearm unsafely (i.e., without any locks or other safety measures in place).¹³ An estimated 4.6 million children/youth live in homes with loaded and unlocked firearms, and research suggests that the risk of suicide and unintentional shootings among youth increases substantially in these kinds of settings.¹⁴

In an effort to restrict access to firearms among children and youth, several states have enacted child-access prevention (CAP) laws or similar safe storage requirements which allow for criminal prosecution of adults who intentionally or carelessly allow unsupervised access to firearms.¹⁵

Research suggests that gun owners who store firearms safely were less likely than individuals who stored firearms unlocked and/or loaded to die by firearm suicide,¹⁶ and that states with safe storage requirements for handguns experience reduced rates of firearm suicide.¹⁷ Studies also suggest that CAP laws can reduce suicide and unintentional firearm injuries and deaths among children and teens by up to 54%, with the most significant reductions in states that also require the safe storage of firearms.¹⁸

A recent review of available research and literature related to lost or stolen firearm reporting requirements conducted by the RAND Corporation found limited evidence that CAP laws may decrease total suicides among youth ages 14-20.¹⁹ The report also found moderate to strong evidence that CAP laws may have an effect on reducing firearm suicides and firearm self-injury among young people, as well as strong evidence that CAP laws may decrease unintentional firearm injuries and deaths among children.²⁰ RAND researchers also found limited evidence that CAP laws decrease unintentional firearm injuries/deaths among adults.

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

- 4. Recommendation: The Commonwealth should explore enacting legislation and support other evidence-informed strategies to improve safe handling and storage of firearms.**

¹³ Cassandra K. Crifasi, et al., “Storage Practices of US Gun Owners in 2016,” *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 4 (2018): 532–537.

¹⁴ *Safe Storage*, Giffords Law Center, <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/child-consumer-safety/safe-storage/>; Andrew Morrall et al., “Child-Access Prevention Laws,” *The Science of Gun Policy*, RAND Corporation, August 2018.

¹⁵ Andrew Morrall et al., “Child-Access Prevention Laws,” *The Science of Gun Policy*, RAND Corporation, August 2018.

¹⁶ Edmond D. Shenassa, Michelle L. Rogers, Kirsten L. Spalding, and Mary B. Roberts, “Safer Storage of Firearms at Home and Risk of Suicide: a Study of Protective Factors in a Nationally Representative Sample,” *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 58, no. 10 (2004): 841–848.

¹⁷ Michael D. Anestis and Joye C. Anestis, “Suicide Rates and State Laws Regulating Access and Exposure to Handguns,” *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 10 (2015): 2049–2058.

¹⁸ Emma C. Hamilton, et al., “Variability of Child Access Prevention Laws and Pediatric Firearm Injuries,” *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery* 84, no. 4 (2018): 613–619. *See also*, Peter Cummings, David C. Grossman, Frederick P. Rivara, and Thomas D. Koepsell, “State Gun Safe Storage Laws and Child Mortality Due to Firearms,” *JAMA* 278, no. 13 (1997): 1084–1086; Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, April M. Zeoli, and Jennifer A. Manganello, “Association Between Youth-focused Firearm Laws and Youth Suicides,” *JAMA* 292, no. 5 (2004): 594–601; Jeffrey DeSimone, Sara Markowitz, and Jing Xu, “Child Access Prevention Laws and Nonfatal Gun Injuries,” *Southern Economic Journal* 80, no. 1 (2013): 5–25.

¹⁹ Andrew Morrall et al., “Child-Access Prevention Laws,” *The Science of Gun Policy*.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

- a. The Joint State Government Commission or similar body should provide a review of CAP laws enacted in other states and present findings to the General Assembly, including a summary of available research on what models have had the greatest impact on reducing rates of suicide by firearms and unintentional shootings. This analysis should also explore specific implementation steps as well as costs associated with implementation in states that have adopted CAP laws.
- b. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should establish a workgroup to explore if there are any gaps that currently exist when unintentional shootings occur in Pennsylvania (e.g., whether adults might already be held liable for unintentional shootings by minors if there is evidence of intent or negligence), and identify opportunities to balance accountability with trauma-informed approaches. The workgroup will compile a list of relevant Pennsylvania laws, such as reckless endangerment, and will analyze available data to explore intersections with criminal activity.
- c. PCCD should work with its Advisory Committees and other state agencies to identify and implement evidence-informed practices that can be supported through non-legislative means, such as education and awareness campaigns, prevention initiatives, funding/grants, and other efforts.
- d. To aid in establishing baseline data and determining impact of policies and programs, state agencies should provide relevant aggregate data and findings from programs like Child Welfare Checks, Child Death and Suicide Death Reviews regarding firearm-related injuries and fatalities.
- e. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should convene a workgroup to recommend specific safe firearm storage practices for action by the legislature with input from all the key stakeholder groups, including addressing potential enforcement provisions (range of sanctions) as well as potential exceptions.
- f. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should research and recommend alternatives to reduce the cost of safe gun storage and should provide data on effective gun storage alternatives for different types of firearms.

Mental Health

Mental illness does not discriminate based on age, gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, or other characteristics. In fact, mental illness affects one in five Americans, and more than half of adults in the U.S. will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.²¹

While mental health is often cited as a contributing factor in the aftermath of incidents like mass shootings, research suggests that people with mental illness are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators.²² When acts of violence by people with mental illness occur, they usually result from lack of access to necessary mental health services and treatment.²³

²¹ [Learn About Mental Health](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018.

²² [Violence and Gun Reporting Laws](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness, accessed January 19, 2020.

²³ [Violence and Gun Reporting Laws](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness, accessed January 19, 2020.

Multiple Workgroups focused on the limited availability of high-quality mental health and behavioral health supports in communities across Pennsylvania, pointing to declines in state funding for county-based services as well as stigma related to accessing treatment.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about levels of secondary/vicarious trauma among first responders who are called to respond to acts of violence, including firearm-related incidents, as well as a culture that may prevent professionals who are experiencing mental health issues from seeking help and receiving care.

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

5. Recommendation: Increase investments in mental health and other healthcare services to promote equitable access to critical care for all Pennsylvanians.

- a. Expand rural access to mental health and other healthcare services, including expanding use of technology such as telepsychiatry and telemedicine.

6. Recommendation: Build resiliency and wellness among professionals working in public health, public safety, law enforcement, and justice systems by reducing stigma related to mental health in the first responder community and expanding access to treatment and supports.

- a. PCCD and PSP should work with local law enforcement agencies to promote the adoption of first responder (including dispatchers) mental health and wellness best practices that reduce stigma, including information about the expected immediate and long-term reactions to secondary or vicarious trauma.
- b. Resources should also be provided to improve local capacity to support law enforcement and other first responders, including information for medical and mental health providers on serving these populations.
- c. Review resources developed in response to the federal Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017 (LEMHWA), including the Report to Congress and Eleven Case Studies on LEMHWA developed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS),²⁴ for model programs.
- d. In addition to mental health services, increase access to first responder peer support groups, especially for smaller agencies in rural communities, as well as increase support for PSP's Peer Support Teams.

Healing Centered Engagement/Trauma-Informed Approaches

Research suggests that traumatic experiences – especially those occurring in childhood – can have significant and long-lasting effects on individuals, including increased risk of behavioral health and chronic physical health conditions, substance use, mental health concerns, and other risky behaviors that can present challenges in relationships, education, careers, and other parts of life.²⁵

²⁴ [Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness \(LEMHWA\) Program Resources](#), U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office, accessed January 22, 2020.

²⁵ [Trauma and Violence](#), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), accessed January 18, 2020.

Communities across the country, including here in Pennsylvania, have adopted trauma-informed approaches (also known as “trauma-informed care”) to better understand and address the impacts of trauma in schools, hospitals, juvenile justice departments, youth development programs, mental health services, and other spaces.²⁶ In 2019, Pennsylvania enacted new statewide requirements for trauma-informed approaches in schools, including training for preparing educators, board members, and school employees, as well as the creation of a [Model Trauma-Informed Approach Plan](#) by PCCD’s School Safety and Security Committee.²⁷ The Commonwealth also has numerous initiatives supporting education, health and human service agencies in employing trauma-informed approaches, including funding opportunities, statewide Communities of Practice, the [PA Care Partnership System of Care](#), and other programs.

While trauma-informed care is important, it has limitations, including assumptions that trauma is experienced and should be treated individually rather than collectively, and too much focus on the treatment of pathology (trauma) rather than on fostering possibility (well-being).²⁸ To promote a more holistic approach, public health, human services, and youth-serving organizations are increasingly adopting a healing-centered approach that builds on individual and community assets and acknowledges that people are more than the worst thing that has happened to them.²⁹

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

7. Recommendation: The Commonwealth should support healing centered engagement (also known as trauma-informed approaches) as a model for supporting individuals and communities who have experienced trauma and violence, including gun violence.

- a. Building on existing momentum in Pennsylvania as well as actions taken in other states, the Commonwealth should become a “Healing Centered and Trauma-Informed State.” This could be accomplished through legislation or executive action (such as an Executive Order signed by the Governor) establishing a common definition and identifying specific actions that state agencies and partners will take to support voluntary adoption in neighborhoods, communities, and regions across Pennsylvania.
- b. Promote the “Handle With Care” model, which alerts appropriate school officials that a student has experienced a potentially traumatic event.
- c. Continue to promote the use of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) analysis, school climate surveys, and other tools to identify needs and address gaps related to providing appropriate early interventions with children and youth.
- d. Provide training and professional development on healing centered approaches for individuals and organizations serving students and families.

²⁶ Shawn Ginwright, [“The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.”](#) *Medium*, May 31, 2018.

²⁷ [Trauma Information](#), Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office for Safe Schools, accessed January 18, 2020.

²⁸ Shawn Ginwright, [“The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.”](#) *Medium*, May 31, 2018.

²⁹ Donna Riemer and Rachel Miller, [“Promoting Healing Centered Engagement \(HCE\) Using Trauma-Sensitive Communication Skills.”](#) Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services.

- e. Enhance training for practitioners in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems (prosecutors, public defenders, judges, etc.) around sentencing, trauma-informed approaches and restorative justices.
- f. Ensure that any training, drills, or preparation of students in schools and other settings that include children and other vulnerable populations will take steps to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate and will not induce trauma or potentially retraumatize individuals.

Threat Assessment and Management

Threat assessment was initially developed by the U.S. Secret Service to identify potential threats to public officials and has since evolved into a strategy to prevent targeted violence and other safety concerns used in settings that range from workplaces to hospitals and health centers to educational institutions.³⁰

According to the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, threat assessment is a “systematic investigative approach to identify individuals who exhibit threatening or concerning behavior, gather information to assess whether they pose a risk of harm, and identify appropriate interventions, resources, and supports to manage that risk.”³¹ Research suggests that while there is no single profile of attackers, there are similar patterns and warning signs prior to an act of targeted violence that indicate targeted violence may be preventable if appropriate systems are established, such as threat assessment and management processes.³² For instance, a study of mass attacks in public spaces in 2018 found that more than half of attackers were motivated by a grievance, and nearly all made threatening or concerning communications prior to their attacks.³³

Recognizing the value of these practices, in 2019, Pennsylvania enacted new requirements for school entities to establish threat assessment teams, and expanded resources for training, technical assistance, and other supports for school-based teams.³⁴ The Commonwealth has also instituted tip lines for schools ([Safe2Say Something](#)) as well as the general public ([See Something, Send Something](#)) to report concerns to law enforcement regarding situations in which individuals may pose a threat to themselves or others. In its first year of its operation, the *Safe2Say Something* crisis center in the Office of Attorney General received more than 40,000 tips.³⁵

Workgroups recommended the increased use of threat assessment and management practices beyond school settings to identify and mitigate risks in communities across the Commonwealth.

Workgroup Recommendation and Suggested Action Steps

- 8. Recommendation: Increase use of threat assessment and management practices to identify and mitigate risks in communities.**

³⁰ Dewey G. Cornell, [Overview of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines \(VSTAG\)](#), University of Virginia, June 18, 2018.

³¹ [Mass Attacks in Public Space – 2018](#), U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, July 2019.

³² [Mass Attacks in Public Space – 2018](#).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ [Threat Assessment](#), PCCD, accessed January 19, 2020.

³⁵ Brett Sholtis, [“One year in, crisis center to stop school violence in Pa. has fielded more than 40,000 tips.”](#) *WITF*, January 13, 2020.

- a. Expand the establishment of multidisciplinary threat assessment teams and related trainings to include licensed healthcare professionals, law enforcement, human resources (HR) directors, and other professionals.
- b. Provide education and training to key stakeholders regarding the recognition and reporting of potential threats to prevent targeted violence, including what “leakages” look like (i.e., specific statements, actions, expressions of grievances and threats of violence).
- c. Increase awareness and utilization of *Safe2Say Something* through social media to educate parents/guardians and community members about how to recognize and report concerning behavior through the tip-line program.
- d. Promote and expand use of the “See Something, Send Something” Program, with an emphasis on workplaces and other community-based settings.

2. Background Checks

Background checks for the purchase and/or transfer of firearms are intended to prevent access to weapons by prohibited individuals thought to pose a high risk of danger to themselves or others, thereby reducing gun crime and violence.³⁶

The Governor’s [Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence](#) tasks the Special Council on Gun Violence with exploring best practices and making recommendations related to background check processes. To fulfill this task, Workgroups considered current federal and state background check requirements and identified relevant recommendations and action steps for consideration by the Special Council.

Federal Background Check Process: Under the federal Brady Act, all federally licensed firearms dealers (FFLs) are required to conduct background checks on potential firearm purchasers.³⁷ The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) was developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in partnership with ATF to comply with federal law, and checks available records on persons who may be disqualified from receiving firearms through a comprehensive computerized system.³⁸ Among other things, NICS considers information about individuals’ criminal and mental health histories, as well as any civil orders that may affect their eligibility to purchase or possess a firearm, such as protection from abuse orders.³⁹

Pennsylvania Background Check Process: The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) conducts instantaneous records checks through the web-based Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS), established in compliance with the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act. Since July 1998, Pennsylvania has served as a Point-of-Contact State for NICS, and PSP is required to comply with both state and federal laws in reviewing and making determinations regarding an individual’s eligibility to acquire, transfer, and/or carry firearms.⁴⁰

³⁶ Andrew Morral et al, “Background Checks,” [The Science of Gun Policy](#), RAND Corporation, 2018.

³⁷ [Background Check Procedures](#), Giffords Law Center, accessed December 16, 2019.

³⁸ [About NICS](#), FBI, accessed January 6, 2020.

³⁹ [Background Check Procedures](#), Giffords Law Center, accessed December 16, 2019.

⁴⁰ [2018 Firearms Annual Report](#), Pennsylvania State Police, 2019.

PICS searches the following state and federal databases as part of a background check:⁴¹

- Pennsylvania Criminal History Records
- Juvenile Records (*contained within the criminal history record file*)
- Mental Health File (*involuntary commitment information and adjudication of incompetence*)
- Pennsylvania Protection from Abuse (PFA) File
- Pennsylvania Wanted/Missing Persons File
- Interstate Identification Index (*criminal history records submitted by states throughout the country, federal, and military records*)
- National Crime Information Center (*information on persons subject to civil protection orders, arrest warrants, and immigration violations*)
- NICS Indices (*Illegal/Unlawful Alien Records; Renounced Citizenship; Mental Defectives/Involuntary Commitments; Dishonorable Discharges from the U.S. Armed Services; Unlawful Users of Controlled Substances; State Prohibition Index; and federally disqualifying information that is not otherwise included in these databases*)

In 2018, PICS handled more than one million Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and web-based background checks for FFLs, sheriffs, and law enforcement throughout the Commonwealth, with an overall approval rate of 98 percent.⁴²

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

9. Recommendation: Support legislation that expands Pennsylvania’s current background check requirements to include long guns and private sales/transfers using the same timely process currently in place through PICS.

- a. The General Assembly should amend Pennsylvania’s Uniform Firearms Act (Title 18) to expand background check requirements to include long guns purchased through private sales. Currently, Pennsylvania only requires background checks for all sales of handguns.

10. Recommendation: Close the “boyfriend loophole” by advocating for reforms at the federal and state levels, including supporting reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and proposed provisions that would extend existing firearm restrictions to include current and former dating partners convicted of abuse or stalking charges and develop recommendations to strengthen Pennsylvania’s existing laws.⁴³

- a. The Governor/Administration should continue to communicate support of VAWA reauthorization to Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegation.
- b. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should examine available data and current policies to establish a baseline regarding levels of firearm-related incidents related to dating/intimate partners and provide that information (aggregate) to relevant stakeholders.

⁴¹ [2018 Firearms Annual Report](#), Pennsylvania State Police, 2019.

⁴² [2018 Firearms Annual Report](#), Pennsylvania State Police, 2019.

⁴³ 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 6105(c)(6); 23 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 6102.

- c. The Victim Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) within PCCD should develop recommendations regarding state legislation that would strengthen Pennsylvania’s existing prohibitions on purchase/possession of firearms for abusive dating partners, such as expanding prohibition to include dating partners convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors.

11. Recommendation: Amend Pennsylvania’s Mental Health Procedures Act (MHPA) to close loopholes in current background check processes and require immediate electronic reporting of involuntary mental health commitments to law enforcement (instead of the current 7-day window).

- a. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Governor’s Office and key stakeholders, should draft language amending MHPA to provide for immediate (upon commitment) electronic reporting to law enforcement so information can be captured through PICS and communicated to federal partners who conduct background checks for firearm purchases.
- b. If legislative changes are adopted by the General Assembly, support local implementation by conducting stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, as well as provide training for mental health facilities and professionals on requirements under the law.

3. Keeping Weapons from Dangerous Individuals

The right to bear arms is enshrined in both the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution as well as Article I of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Constitution. While this liberty is guaranteed, federal courts and courts in Pennsylvania have held that these rights are not absolute, and that the state may regulate firearms consistent with powers and duties to protect the safety of its citizens.⁴⁴

Under Pennsylvania’s current Uniform Firearms Act, several disqualifications for purchasing, owning, or possessing firearms are in place to guard against possession of firearms by individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others. These include restrictions for minors, fugitives from justice, persons convicted of various drug or alcohol-related offenses, individuals with certain criminal convictions, individuals adjudicated delinquent for certain violent criminal offenses, those subject to active Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders of convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence, and persons adjudicated incompetent or involuntarily committed under the Mental Health Procedures Act, among other disqualifying provisions.⁴⁵

In recent years, several states have implemented processes that allow families, household members, or law enforcement officers to petition a court directly to temporarily restrict access to firearms for individuals who are deemed by a judge to be a danger to themselves or others.⁴⁶ These Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws have been enacted in 17 states and the District of Columbia, with procedures varying from state to state.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Violence Prevention in Pennsylvania: Report of the Advisory Committee on Violence Prevention*, Joint State Government Commission, General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, December 2013.

⁴⁵ [Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act, §6105](#).

⁴⁶ Timothy Williams, “What Are ‘Red Flag’ Gun Laws, and How Do They Work?” *The New York Times*, August 6, 2019.

⁴⁷ [Extreme Risk Protection Orders](#), Giffords Law Center, accessed January 19, 2020.

Workgroups explored potential strategies to restrict access to firearms for dangerous individuals in an effort to prevent suicide by firearms, mass shootings, and firearm-related homicides in Pennsylvania.

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

12. Recommendation: Explore implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), which allow a petition to a court for the temporary removal of access to firearms in cases where an individual poses a risk of hurting themselves or others.

- b. The Joint State Government Commission should analyze data from states that have implemented ERPO laws to assess impact on suicide by firearms, firearm-related homicide, mass shootings, and other forms of gun violence, and develop recommended legislation for consideration by the General Assembly. This analysis should also explore specific implementation steps and related costs.
- c. If enacted, provide necessary training for law enforcement on the safe removal of firearms from homes as part of ERPO procedures.
- d. If enacted, provide funding for safe storage facilities throughout the Commonwealth to aid sheriffs, local and state law enforcement implementation of ERPO procedures.

13. Recommendation: Develop temporary and voluntary safe, off-site firearm storage options for gun owners, including during times of crisis.

- a. Support grassroots groups like Hold My Guns⁴⁸ that create opportunities for individuals in crisis or family members with the option to temporarily store firearms outside of their homes through partnerships with gun shops.
- b. Encourage partnerships between local law enforcement, gun shops/ranges, psychiatric facilities and other organizations to increase access to safe storage options and awareness of voluntary surrender options, along with restoration of firearms.
- c. Explore potential legislation establishing Good Samaritan provisions that offer immunity for non-medical providers (i.e., federally licensed firearm dealers, other authorized individuals/entities) who provide temporary, voluntary options for surrender/storage of firearms, including addressing how to return firearms legally to owners.
- d. Identify strategies to increase available storage options for firearms for individuals entering restricted locations like schools, courthouses, workplaces, etc.

4. Cross-Agency Alignment

Throughout the course of public hearings and Workgroup meetings, stakeholders emphasized the need to improve cross-agency alignment to address gun violence. As one researcher who provided testimony noted, coordination of information and resources, including data sharing, is critical because “working

⁴⁸ Brett Sholtis, [“Two firearm safety instructors have a plan to prevent suicides among gun owners.”](#) *WITF*, December 18, 2019.

with those most at risk of picking up a gun often involves multiple agencies collaborating – such as schools, police, probation, child welfare, hospitals, and community-based nonprofits.”⁴⁹

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

14. Recommendation: To promote better coordination between public health and public safety, significantly increase investments in enhanced data collection and reporting as well as data analysis and research focused on firearm-related injuries/fatalities and crimes.

- a. Promote streamlined data sharing and analysis between state and local law enforcement agencies, coroners/medical examiners (CMEs), courts, state agencies, and other organizations (i.e., research, policy, advocacy organizations).
- b. To better capture fatal and nonfatal injury data related to firearms in Pennsylvania, strongly encourage and incentivize increased participation by CMEs and law enforcement in the Pennsylvania Violent Death Reporting System (PA VDRS) and similar surveillance systems.
- c. PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should coordinate with partners to identify and analyze available datasets that capture information about firearm-related incidents, such as the Pennsylvania Healthcare Cost Containment Council (PHC4) or Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation.

15. Recommendation: Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered approach.

- a. Adopt a model like “Warm Handoff” (used as part of Pennsylvania’s response to the opioid crisis) or the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI)⁵⁰ to provide individuals in emergency rooms and hospitals with immediate access to services and supports that can help them heal post-discharge.

5. Reducing Community Gun Violence

In 2017, 1,636 people died from an injury caused by a firearm in Pennsylvania, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including 643 firearm-related homicides and unintentional shootings.⁵¹ Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Pennsylvania; each year, an average of 111 children and teens die in firearm-related incidents across the state.⁵²

Analysis of data from the CDC indicates Pennsylvania had the 18th highest rate of firearm-related homicides in the country from 2008 through 2017, with a rate of 4.07 firearm-related homicides per 100,000 residents.⁵³ According to the Pennsylvania State Police’s Uniform Crime Report (UCR), the total number of homicides in Pennsylvania has increased in recent years. In approximately 75 percent of cases

⁴⁹ Special Council on Gun Violence, PCCD, *Public Hearing on Reducing Community Gun Violence, December 5, 2019*, Philadelphia, 2019 (statement of Caterina Roman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Temple University).

⁵⁰ [Violence Prevention Initiative](#), Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute.

⁵¹ [Firearm Mortality by State](#), CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, accessed January 19, 2020.

⁵² [Gun Violence in Pennsylvania](#), Everytown for Gun Safety, October 2019.

⁵³ [Pennsylvania Gun Violence](#), Center for American Progress, November 2019.

from 2016 to 2018, firearms were used in homicides, with handguns accounting for 60 percent of firearm-related homicides.⁵⁴

Interpersonal gun violence disproportionately affects underserved communities of color across the country and in Pennsylvania. In 2016, nearly 80 percent of firearm-related homicide victims in Pennsylvania were black or Hispanic.⁵⁵ In addition, research suggests unarmed black civilians are nearly five times more likely than unarmed white civilians to be shot and killed by law enforcement.⁵⁶

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

16. Recommendation: To address resource disparities and gaps, the Commonwealth should explore strategies to increase investments in community-led efforts to address gun violence, such as expanding voluntary payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements and/or requiring academic research institutions to provide funding/research support as part of their non-profit/tax exempt status.

- a. Establish a workgroup comprised of regional/community leaders, higher education officials (both public and private postsecondary institutions), community/economic development professionals, researchers, and grassroots organizations from geographically diverse areas to develop strategies to increase available resources to support community-led efforts to reduce gun violence.
- b. The workgroup should also develop recommendations to increase higher education support for community-led efforts to develop theories of change, community-based participatory research projects, and strengthen programmatic and administrative capacity and rigor for community-led initiatives.

17. Recommendation: Provide additional training for professionals in public safety, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems on best practices to build trust and promote better accountability between law enforcement and the community.

- a. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should work with PSP and state law enforcement professional associations to reduce community violence and trauma (perceived or real) through improved police-community relations to address lack of trust and fear of police-involved deadly force encounters.
- b. Improve available training on best practices in reducing use-of-force, increasing sanctity of life as a priority, implicit bias, de-escalation tactics, procedural justice, cultural competence, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and other issues.
- c. Local law enforcement agencies should reduce use of force and police-deadly force encounters through evidence-based policies and practices.

18. Recommendation: Identify and support evidence-informed programs that build trust between police and the communities they serve (i.e., Youth Law Enforcement Forum, community-oriented policing, etc.).

⁵⁴ Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data, PSP.

⁵⁵ *The Economic Cost of Gun Violence in Pennsylvania*, Giffords Law Center, August 2018.

⁵⁶ Aldina Mesic, et al., "The Relationship between Structural Racism and Black-white Disparities in Fatal Police Shootings at the State Level," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 110, no. 2 (2018): 106–116.

- a. PCCD should continue to promote programs, frameworks, resources, and lessons learned from successful grant-funded initiatives that should be replicated in Pennsylvania to improve police-community communication and trust.
- b. Develop and disseminate program case studies, facilitator selection guides, curriculum-based programs, etc.
- c. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should support locally designed and implemented programs that address community gun violence (funding, technical assistance, research/evaluation, etc.).
- d. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should facilitate development of a statewide community of practice, comprised of grantees and local community leaders, to offer opportunities for peer support, sharing best practices, and helping inform work/decisions of state leaders.

19. Recommendation: Explore strategies to reduce the number of unsolved homicides by firearms in the Commonwealth.

- a. PSP should work with the ATF and FBI to improve the number of unsolved homicides by firearms through a joint task force.
- b. Explore strategies to increase utilization of eTrace and PICS for confiscated firearms by local law enforcement. Identify current practice in the field, potential barriers, available data, etc.

20. Recommendation: State and local law enforcement agencies should work together to identify effective and practical strategies for addressing illegal guns and preventing firearm-related crime.

- a. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should establish an interagency workgroup comprised of state and local stakeholders to analyze and recommend effective strategies to reduce availability of illegal guns and prevent firearm-related crime.
- b. Explore available data and research around gun buyback programs and support local initiatives. This includes the development of guidelines for local gun buyback programs by PSP, pursuant to [Executive Order 2019-06](#), as well as exploring innovative "buyback" concepts that go beyond providing money to firearm owners, such as programs that connect individuals to education and training programs for in-demand fields.
- c. Identify and support effective practices to prevent and reduce straw purchases.
- d. Identify and address impacts of emerging trends in firearms used in crimes, such as "ghost guns."
- e. Identify potential gaps in current firearm transactions, such as private sales through online forums, that put law-abiding residents at risk for purchasing or selling firearms from or to bad actors.

21. Recommendation: Identify strategies and interventions to ensure safe routes to and from school for youth in areas with high rates of gun violence, including safe transportation options.

- a. The Pennsylvania Department of Education should work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and PCCD to disseminate and promote safe school transportation alternative practices for students in areas with high rates of gun violence.
- b. Local education agencies and local law enforcement should work together with communities to implement and sustain safe routes to and from school, particularly in areas with high rates of gun violence.

22. Recommendation: Support community-led efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence, including partnerships between faith-based organizations, healthcare practitioners, educators, community leaders, youth, activists, and grassroots organizations.

Funding-Related Action Steps

- a. The Commonwealth should close funding and resource gaps by increasing investments in community-led strategies to reduce gun violence.
- b. Explore the possibility of multi-year grants for communities most impacted by gun violence so there can be a sustained community-led effort to prevent and reduce gun violence.
- c. Focus funding on community-led efforts, such as expanding the Credible Messenger Program.
- d. Invest in capacity and coalition building efforts for grassroots organizations to “organize” and align resources and services in communities, regions, and statewide.

Programming-Related Action Steps

- e. Expand mentorship programs in schools and communities to address impacts of gun violence, including programs that support reentrants.
- f. Support community-designed strategies to increase availability of safe routes and transportation options for youth and adults in communities with high rates of gun violence.
- g. Support community-led investments in low-cost blight reduction, and measure impacts on gun violence reduction.

23. Recommendation: Focus on primary violence prevention by exploring more ways to remove barriers to education, training, and employment and creating opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage.

- a. Municipalities and counties should identify gaps and promising strategies that address barriers to employment and expand living wage options, including efforts to implement “Ban the Box” and Clean Slate initiatives.
- b. Support strategies to increase youth part-time employment as part of positive youth development strategies.
- c. Continue to support access to technical education and training, including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, for system-involved youth and adults.

24. Recommendation: Promote and increase investments in youth engagement as a violence prevention and intervention strategy and create safe places – both online and in communities – to foster resilience among at-risk youth by providing increased funding and resources for neighborhoods and communities.

- a. Create new funding opportunities, such as microgrants, to support youth and community organizations’ capacity building and development in this space.
- b. Increase funding for existing evidence-informed violence and delinquency prevention programs focused on youth, families, and communities supported through PCCD in partnership with Penn State EPISCenter.⁵⁷

6. Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings

In the last decade, more than 1,600 Pennsylvanians were killed as a result of domestic violence, including 123 individuals in 2018.⁵⁸ In every year since 2009, at least 49 percent of domestic violence homicide victims in Pennsylvania were killed with a firearm, and firearms were used by offenders in 90 percent of intimate partner murder-suicides.⁵⁹

In recent years, Pennsylvania has made important progress in addressing domestic violence in terms of both policy and practice. [Act 79 of 2018](#) went into effect on April 10, 2019, and requires the relinquishment of weapons, including firearms, in both Protection from Abuse orders and convictions of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence.⁶⁰

Since 2012, PCCD has partnered with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) on statewide implementation of the [Lethality Assessment Program \(LAP\)](#). Currently, LAP is being implemented in 47 domestic violence programs and 365 municipal police departments in 49 counties across Pennsylvania.⁶¹ Data collected since initial implementation of LAP in October 2012 suggests the following outcomes:⁶²

- During 2012 to 2019, more than 24,000 screens were completed by law enforcement.

⁵⁷ [Using Prevention that Works](#), PCCD, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

⁵⁸ Special Council on Gun Violence, PCCD, *Public Hearing on Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings, November 25, 2019*, State College, 2019 (statement of Susan Higginbotham, Executive Director, PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence).

⁵⁹ Special Council on Gun Violence, PCCD, *Public Hearing on Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings, November 25, 2019*, State College, 2019 (statement of Susan Higginbotham, Executive Director, PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence).

⁶⁰ [Domestic Violence & Firearms: PA Act 79](#), Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

⁶¹ Testimony of Susan Higginbotham of PCADV to the Special Council on Gun Violence, November 25, 2019.

⁶² *LAP Dashboards*, PCADV, accessed 12/30/2019, <https://isra.hbg.psu.edu/pcadvdashboards/Home/LAP-Dashboards>.

- Of those, 16,807 victims were identified as being in high danger of being killed by their abuser.
- Of those 16,807 high-danger victims, 9,892 (58.9 percent) agreed to speak with a hotline, including 8,054 calls made while law enforcement was still on the scene.
- Of those who spoke to an advocate, 6,267 (63.4 percent) went to a program to receive further services.

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

25. Recommendation: Examine impact and implementation of Act 79 of 2018, which established new requirements and procedures for firearm relinquishment in cases of final protection-from-abuse (PFA) orders and conviction of the misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.

- a. Create and disseminate Act 79 implementation plans which identify county-specific protocols and procedures, gaps, community resources and coordination mechanisms.
- b. Develop data collection plans to monitor outcomes and areas for refinement working with law enforcement, courts and social services agencies (i.e., identifying what’s working well and common challenges while being mindful of confidentiality/privacy).

26. Recommendation: Explore the possibility of establishing a criminal definition of “domestic violence” in Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) to promote more consistent sentencing of incidents, as well as determine potential unintended consequences, such as dual arrests.

- a. PCCD should work with PCADV and other key stakeholders to examine states that have established criminal definitions and recommend any changes in the criminal definition of “domestic violence” in Pennsylvania (Title 18). (Note: Currently, [sentencing guidelines](#) are provided through the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing.)

27. Recommendation: Reinstate Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews for domestic violence homicides and near homicides in every county in Pennsylvania through legislation.

- a. The General Assembly should adopt legislation establishing Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Review Teams in every county, and tasking those teams with collecting, analyzing, and reporting information related to domestic violence homicides and near homicides, including domestic violence-related shootings.
- b. Local Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Teams would utilize a uniform data collection mechanism to gather relevant information from public records, media reports, and outreach to informants such as law enforcement and family/friends.
- c. Aggregate data analysis/findings will be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, who will provide an annual report of findings and recommendations – developed in consultation with PCADV and key stakeholders – to the General Assembly and Governor.

28. Recommendation: Provide increased resources to support initial and ongoing high-quality professional education opportunities to law enforcement officers and agencies and justice practitioners/systems on how to identify domestic violence and intimate partner violence cases and interact with victims/survivors (i.e., training programs, roll-call trainings, brochures, etc.).

- a. Audit the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC), PSP, and sheriff/deputy sheriff trainings to determine instructor qualifications, identify potential gaps or outdated content, and determine whether to expand length of instruction on topics related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence.
- b. Assess the PA Chiefs of Police Association's resources, including online courses (voluntary) provided through the [PA Virtual Training Network](#), addressing different topics relevant to domestic violence and intimate partner violence, including trauma-informed, revictimization, etc.
- c. Selected trainings should include a focus on understanding dynamics of power and control, as well as identifying dominant aggressor in charging documents and law enforcement reports.
- d. Capture past and current efforts to engage and train justice practitioners (district attorneys, judges, public defenders, etc.) on issues related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Identify strategies to scale and sustain training efforts for justice practitioners across the state moving forward.
- e. Increase available training for campus security/law enforcement, School Resource Officers (SROs), School Police Officers (SPOs), and school security officers on teen dating violence, impacts of domestic violence and related trauma on students, model dating violence policy, etc.
- f. Explore how domestic violence-related information communicated through public safety and crisis tip-lines created for schools (Safe2Say Something) and the general public (See Something, Send Something) are handled currently and determine whether any improvements are needed.

29. Recommendation: Increase opportunities for initial and ongoing training for healthcare practitioners and first responders on trauma-informed approaches to interacting with domestic violence and intimate partner violence victims/survivors, including training on talking with patients and clients about access to firearms as part of discussions about risk and safety.

- a. Audit and map available training programs currently in place for healthcare practitioners and first responders, including EMS/EMT providers, 911 dispatchers, case workers, and other professionals who interact with victims/survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence.
- b. Provide and/or require initial training on domestic violence and intimate partner violence for healthcare professionals, EMS/EMT providers, human services agencies, etc., including training on talking with patients and clients about access to firearms as part of discussions about risk and safety.

30. Recommendation: Integrate training and education around impacts of domestic violence, including domestic violence-related shootings, on children and youth within professional development programs for school-based and youth-serving professionals and elevate the importance of social workers and mental health supports within school settings to identify and address impacts of trauma.

- a. Increase adoption of policies and practices within K-12 schools that address the [model dating violence policies and programs](#) developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- b. Explore models like “Handle with Care,” which alerts appropriate school personnel that a student has experienced a potentially traumatic event.
- c. Connect school entities with available community-based resources so they can better support children and families experiencing intersections of gun violence and domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

31. Recommendation: Identify strategies to promote more consistent reporting mechanisms and procedures for law enforcement agencies for domestic violence-related incidents and/or patterns of escalation (e.g., stalking, harassment, etc.). For example, consider methods of capturing and analyzing first responder calls/responses, not just arrests.

- a. Improve quality and consistency of information reported by law enforcement, including capturing firearm-related issues, defining the relationship between the defendant and the victim (intimate partner violence vs. family/household members) within charging documents and law enforcement reports.
- b. Explore technology upgrades that could enhance efficiency and quality of cross-agency coordination, including data collection and reporting efforts.
- c. Collate and analyze data from report narratives developed in incidents of domestic violence-related shootings (law enforcement, coroners/medical examiners, EMS/911 dispatch data, etc.).
- d. Explore available research and data on the prevalence and impacts of children and youth victimization in domestic violence-related shootings and gun violence more broadly and support additional data collection and research efforts in Pennsylvania.
- e. Provide funding to support statewide transition of law enforcement agencies from Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) by 2021, and utilize data collected NIBRS to support research focused on domestic violence-related shootings and other incidents.

32. Recommendation: Create a framework to explore, test, and replicate innovative and evidence-informed domestic violence model programs being implemented in other states.

- a. PCCD’s Victims Services Advisory Committee should explore implementation and support of innovative models that have been implemented in other states, such as Domestic Violence Advocates embedded in local law enforcement agencies.

33. Recommendation: Provide families and individual survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence with necessary and comprehensive support services to mitigate the impacts of trauma and prevent further violence.

- a. PCADV should continue to work with county domestic violence programs to coordinate access to comprehensive services to mitigate trauma related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence and other forms of violence and trauma, including safety planning related to firearms (e.g., trauma support, education, employment and workforce development, mental health services, etc.), including a focus on awareness/education around recognizing signs of abuse, risks related to access to firearms, etc.

34. Recommendation: Expand access to protections and safety measures for victims/survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence by increasing the number/availability of PFA attorneys and free legal services in communities across Pennsylvania.

- a. PCCD should establish a workgroup within its Victim Services Advisory Committee to identify short- and long-term strategies to increase the number of PFA attorneys available in the Commonwealth to provide free legal services for victims/survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence to ensure sufficient coverage statewide.
- b. As part of these efforts, the workgroup should explore potential policy levers, such as funding for programs, loan forgiveness, etc., to address shortages and high rates of turnover within the field.

35. Recommendation: Support voluntary statewide deployment/adoption of and fidelity to the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) model by counties and the Pennsylvania State Police.

- a. Promote and provide funding to support voluntary PCADV LAP training for state and local law enforcement officers and agencies in counties and municipalities across the Commonwealth.
- b. Provide funding to support purchase of cell phones for law enforcement officers that can be used as part of LAP to call [local domestic violence programs](#).
- c. Provide funding to support implementation of LAP in communities to ensure availability of services and supports post-referral.
- d. Explore with PCADV the Pittsburgh LAP mobile app for law enforcement, funded through a grant, to determine whether additional funding could support development of a similar tool statewide.

7. Preventing Suicide by Firearms

According to data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. In Pennsylvania, suicide rates have increased by 34 percent since 1999 – an increase higher than the national average.⁶³

The majority of firearm-related deaths in Pennsylvania are suicides (993 out of 1,636 fatalities in 2017). Of the Commonwealth's more than 2,000 suicide deaths in 2017, nearly half were firearm-related.⁶⁴ While firearms are utilized in only about 5 percent of suicide attempts, they account for nearly half of all suicide deaths since the fatality rate for suicide attempt by firearms is significantly higher than other attempt methods (between 84-92 percent).⁶⁵

Nationally, the firearm suicide rate has increased by 19 percent over the past decade, with firearm suicide rates of children and teens increasing by 82 percent over the same time period.⁶⁶ In 2017, the Veteran suicide rate in Pennsylvania was significantly higher than the overall suicide rate for non-Veteran adults; 257 Pennsylvania Veterans died by suicide in 2017, with 65.8 percent of suicide deaths involving firearms.⁶⁷

In an effort to prevent suicide by firearms, other states have employed a number of policies and initiatives. The Preventing Suicide by Firearms Workgroup analyzed efforts in other states, including ERPO laws, waiting periods, and suicide prevention campaigns, as well as explored initial findings of the Pennsylvania Suicide Prevention Task Force, established by Governor Wolf in May 2019.⁶⁸

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

36. Recommendation: Explore potential amendments to MHPA and/or the Uniform Firearms Act regarding firearm prohibitions for individuals with involuntary mental health commitments to address concerns related to unintended consequences (i.e., individuals not seeking mental health treatment because of concerns over losing right to own firearms, cost/burden of current processes for expungement and restoration of rights, etc.)

- a. The Joint State Government Commission should study and recommend ways to address concerns about unintended consequences of Pennsylvania's firearm prohibitions for involuntary mental health commitments (Sections 302, 303, and 304 of MHPA) and related procedures to identify potential exceptions that do not undermine public safety.
- b. Identify key stakeholder and relevant policies and protocols that would also need to be addressed if changes in law were made, such as educating patients about restoration alternatives upon discharge, etc.

⁶³ [Gov. Wolf: Statewide Suicide Prevention Task Force Created to Strengthen Supports for People in Crisis](#), Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, May 29, 2019.

⁶⁴ [2017 USA State Suicide: All Suicides vs. Firearm Suicides](#), December 2018.

⁶⁵ Matthew Wintersteen, Ph.D., "Preventing Suicide by Firearms," testimony presented to the Special Council on Gun Violence, November 22, 2019.

⁶⁶ [Firearm Suicide in the United States](#), Everytown for Gun Safety, August 30, 2019.

⁶⁷ [Pennsylvania: Veteran Suicide Data Sheet, 2017](#), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, June 2019.

⁶⁸ [Pennsylvania Statewide Suicide Prevention Task Force Initial Report](#), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, January 14, 2020.

37. Recommendation: Consider legislation to establish waiting periods for purchasing firearms from licensed dealers, as well as other policies that aim to reduce access to lethal means.

- a. The Joint State Government Commission or another state entity should study legislation adopted by other states to reduce access to lethal means through a range of policies, including waiting period laws, emergency exceptions, ERPOs, background check timeline requirements, suicide safety planning, voluntary relinquishment of firearms, etc.
- b. Policy recommendations should be developed in consultation with key stakeholders for consideration by the General Assembly and Governor's Office.

38. Recommendation: Support development of post-discharge protocols in hospitals and emergency departments that improve access to services and transition plans for individuals who have attempted suicide, including attempted suicide by firearms.

- a. Develop and scale a "hot handoff" protocols for hospitals and emergency rooms, similar to the "warm handoff" protocols used in response to the opioid crisis, to ensure careful and successful post-discharge care for attempted suicide survivors, including attempted suicide by firearms.
- b. Provide funding and resources to support implementation.

39. Recommendation: Allocate more resources for evidence-informed suicide prevention programs as well as mental health and counseling services for youth.

- a. Build on implementation of Act 71 of 2014 to ensure that school and university-based mental health and counseling systems have access to evidence-informed suicide prevention tools to improve screening and referrals of students for mental health services.
- b. Commonwealth agencies should work together to promote awareness of suicide contagion, especially in schools, and support implementation of nationally recognized postvention protocols, such as coordinating with parents/families, faith-based groups, youth-serving organizations, and Loss Teams, to reduce the phenomena.
- c. Promote partnerships between communities and schools to enhance a continuum of care and supports for youth and families.
- d. Provide funding focused on closing gaps in available crisis counseling and other mental health supports.

40. Recommendation: To reduce chances of schools and organizations selecting ineffective training programs, create a monitoring/evaluation process that ensures quality of suicide prevention trainers and training organizations.

- a. The Department of Human Services' Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) should work with state and local partners to develop standards to certify trainers and professional development providers as well as training content to deliver evidence-informed suicide prevention education.

- b. OMHSAS should also work with partners and research organizations to identify metrics to evaluate program impacts and efficacy, including data collection and analysis protocols.
- c. Expand access to and participation in evidence-informed trainings statewide, with a focus on schools, postsecondary institutions and youth/community-serving organizations.
- d. Promote evidence-informed training and establish a statewide network of suicide prevention trainers and/or Community of Practice to support their efforts (convenings, exploring data together, etc.).

41. Recommendation: The Commonwealth should develop and launch a comprehensive suicide prevention campaign that promotes evidence-informed strategies to reduce access to lethal means specifically focused on preventing suicide by firearms.

- a. The Department of Human Services should work with state partners to develop a comprehensive communication strategy, including PSAs and media outreach, that address suicide prevention education and awareness, including how to reduce access to lethal means.

42. Recommendation: Provide training and technical assistance to healthcare providers and first responders to increase utilization of evidence-informed strategies to promote lethal means reduction.

- a. Encourage clinicians and licensing entities, including primary care providers and rehabilitation programs, to include lethal means reduction information in crisis and safety plans, with a focus on firearms.
- b. Promote lethal means reduction as an essential component to suicide safety planning.
- c. Offer training on reducing access to lethal means at local and state suicide prevention conferences.
- d. Provider medical professionals, including primary care practitioners, with tools to
- e. support conversations with patients concerning access to firearms.
- f. Promote development and use of evidence-informed trainings and resources, such as CALM training.
- g. State and local law enforcement and other first responders should consider use of tools such as the CSSRS, which addresses suicide prevention through early identification of risk.

43. Recommendation: Expand Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement agencies and justice practitioners to improve interactions with people experiencing mental health episodes or disabilities, as well as promote training on reduction of force techniques, particularly in cases involving a firearm or “suicide by police officer” attempts.

- a. PCCD should continue to work with local law enforcement agencies and justice practitioners, as well as professional associations, to increase access to high-quality, certified CIT for police, dispatchers, and others in the criminal/juvenile justice systems through funding, training, technical assistance, and other support.
- b. Partner with police and first responders to disseminate information about reducing access to lethal means and specifically addressing firearms access.
- c. Increase availability of evidence-informed training on reduction of force techniques for law enforcement, especially in cases involving a firearm or “suicide by police officer” attempts.
- d. Support co-responder models that connect crisis response services with law enforcement during incident response.

44. Recommendation: Build more impactful collaboration between suicide prevention community groups, “natural listeners” (bartenders, beauticians, barber shops), research institutions, veterans’ groups, schools, healthcare organizations, and other entities.

- a. OMHSAS should coordinate with PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention and DOH’s Division of Violence Prevention and relevant stakeholders to create a stronger suicide prevention community of practice and promote statewide and county-level information sharing and collaboration to elevate and maximize impact.
- b. Share information with county suicide prevention task forces to develop and implement a lethal means subcommittee within their structures.

8. Reducing Likelihood of Accidental/Unintentional Shootings

According to data from the CDC, 253 people in Pennsylvania died as a result of an unintentional shooting between 2008 and 2017; more than one in five of these victims were under the age of 21.⁶⁹ Firearms account for 13 percent of all injury-related deaths in the Commonwealth, and nearly 27 percent of injury-related deaths for children and youth.

Firearm injury is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for children and young adults, and research suggests the risk of unintentional and self-inflicted firearm injury is lower when all household firearms are stored safely and locked.⁷⁰ However, an estimated one in four household guns in the U.S. are stored loaded, and half of those guns are unlocked.⁷¹ A recently published article from the Journal of Urban Health suggests an estimated 7 percent of children in the U.S. (approximately 4.6 million children) live in homes with at least one gun that is loaded and unlocked.⁷²

⁶⁹ [Pennsylvania Gun Violence](#), Center for American Progress, November 2019.

⁷⁰ M. Monuteaux, et al, “Association of Increased Safe Household Firearm Storage With Firearm Suicide and Unintentional Death Among US Youths,” *Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) Pediatrics*, 2019.

⁷¹ *Personal Firearms: Programs that Promote Safe Storage and Research on Their Effectiveness*, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), September 2017, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/687239.pdf>.

⁷² D. Azrael, et al, “Firearm Storage in Gun-Owning Households with Children: Results of a 2015 National Survey,” *Journal of Urban Health*, June 2018, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5993703/>.

Data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), which is administered every other year to students across the Commonwealth enrolled in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12, suggest that significant levels of perceived availability of handguns in their communities. Nearly 28 percent of students surveyed in 2017 said they could easily get access to a handgun.⁷³

Unsafe storage and easy access can have harmful consequences, especially for children and youth. A database of information on unintentional shootings by children compiled by the national group Everytown Research suggests that in that same year, there were at least 19 unintentional shootings by children in Pennsylvania, resulting in 6 deaths and 13 injuries.⁷⁴

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

45. Recommendation: Analyze implementation and outcomes of state laws that enhance licensing and permitting requirements for firearm ownership and/or concealed carry permits (i.e., minimum age, training/skills, etc.).

- a. The Joint State Government Commission or similar body should review and provide a summary of current firearm purchasing, licensing, and permitting requirements, including exceptions, to determine impacts of implementing policies such as increasing the minimum age to purchase a firearm, institute additional requirements related to training for individuals applying for concealed carry permits, etc. The analysis should also include specific implementation steps employed by states, as well as a breakdown of potential costs.
- b. State agencies shall provide relevant information and data to support these efforts, including data on firearm-related incidents in the Commonwealth.

46. Recommendation: Increase the emphasis on creating child-safe homes through early education and awareness for providers and parents/guardians, from pre-natal through adulthood, on the importance of safe storage practices and availability of safety training.

- a. Support local partnerships with health and human service agencies, early learning resource centers, and home visiting programs to increase awareness of firearm safety practices and resources.
- b. Promote locally designed firearm safety efforts/models such as “Ben’s Campaign – Lock It Up,” developed and launched in Bucks County through a partnership between the District Attorney’s Office, NOVA, law enforcement agencies, sheriff’s office, human services agencies, and other local partners.
- c. Train providers about having conversations with patients and clients about firearms, concerns, options, etc., that increase confidence, trust, and likelihood of adopting safe firearm storage and use practices.
- d. Pair safe firearm handling and storage conversations with free gun locks to increase likelihood of implementing best practices.

⁷³ [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#), PCCD.

⁷⁴ #NotAnAccident Index, Everytown Research, <https://everytownresearch.org/notanaccident/#12683>

- e. Promote available resources for families, including training, materials, and education campaigns that help facilitate conversations about gun storage in other households (i.e., “questions to ask” guides).

47. Recommendation: Address the biggest barriers to safe firearm storage, such as cost, ease of use, training/education, etc., by supporting gunlock giveaways and offsetting costs of gun storage devices and safety training.

- a. Incentivize research and development of technology that limits unauthorized access to firearms beyond those currently available on the market.
- b. Offset costs of gun safety/storage devices through tax breaks/exemptions or other means.
- c. Partner with community groups to assist with gun lock distribution efforts and to explore providing immunity for voluntarily turning in firearms. (Note: These efforts should complement government-led efforts like PSP’s gunlock giveaways and buyback program guidelines.)

9. Combatting Mass Shootings

Although mass shootings receive significant attention from both media outlets and policymakers, measuring and reporting on these mass casualty events is challenging given the lack of a commonly accepted definition.

- The FBI defines “mass murder” as a multiple homicide incident in which four or more victims are murdered, within one event, and in one or more locations in close geographic proximity. (Note: The definition excludes cases in which killings are part of another crime, or if all victims are related to the perpetrator.)⁷⁵
- The Congressional Research Service (CRS) defines mass shootings as events in which more than four people are killed with a firearm within one event and in one or more locations in close proximity.⁷⁶
- The Office for Victims of Crime defines “mass violence” as “an intentional violent crime that results in physical, emotional, or psychological injury to a sufficiently large number of people and significantly increases the burden of victim assistance and compensation for the responding jurisdiction, as determined by the OVC director.”⁷⁷

The media organization *Mother Jones* uses a combination of these definitions in its *U.S. Mass Shootings* database, which indicates there have been at least 117 recorded mass shootings in the U.S. since 1982,

⁷⁵ Tara S. Hughes, “Mass Violence,” testimony presented to the Special Council on Gun Violence, November 21, 2019.

⁷⁶ [Mass Casualty Shootings](#), National Center for Victims of Crime, 2018.

⁷⁷ Office for Victims of Crime. (2016). [“Office for Victims of Crime, Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program \(AEAP\) Brochure.”](#) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

including 10 in 2019.⁷⁸ Research suggests that, while still statistically rare events, the number and frequency of mass shootings has increased significantly in recent years.⁷⁹

An analysis of mass attacks in public spaces in 2018 from the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center found that the overwhelming majority of attacks were carried out using firearms (89 percent).⁸⁰ Additional analysis of the 143 guns possessed by mass shooters indicates that more than three-quarters were legally obtained.⁸¹ The majority of shooters possessed high-capacity magazines and/or modern sporting rifles; 71 firearms used in mass shootings were semiautomatic handguns.⁸² Incidents occurred in a variety of settings, including places of business, open spaces, schools, transportation, and houses of worship.⁸³ One of those incidents was the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, which took the lives of 11 individuals and injured six more and was motivated by anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant beliefs.⁸⁴

Research suggests that the impact of human-caused, intentional acts of harm and death, including mass shootings, are more negative and intense than that of natural disasters or accidents.⁸⁵ Individuals and communities that experience mass shootings have significant short- and long-term needs, including increases in mental health needs, substance use, interpersonal violence, divorces, decreases in school and work performance and suicides.⁸⁶

Workgroup Recommendations and Suggested Action Steps

48. Recommendation: Adopt an official statewide position that mass shooters' names will not be released unless public safety reasons or other relevant situations require it (i.e., shooter is still at large).

- a. The Governor's Office and Office of Administration should issue a Management Directive stating that agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction will not release the names of mass shooters unless public safety reasons or other relevant situations require it, and encourage local law enforcement agencies and the media to follow the same practice.
- b. Collaborate with media organizations and professionals to provide outreach, training, and education to inform safer reporting practices.

49. Recommendation: Include mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incidents in emergency management plans for congregate care settings, such as education institutions and healthcare facilities.

⁷⁸ Mark Follman, Gavin Aronsen, and Deanna Pan, "[A Guide to Mass Shootings in America](#)," *Mother Jones*, December 11, 2019.

⁷⁹ [A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013](#), U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014.

⁸⁰ [Mass Attacks in Public Space – 2018](#), U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, July 2019.

⁸¹ Mark Follman, Gavin Aronsen, and Deanna Pan, "[A Guide to Mass Shootings in America](#)," *Mother Jones*, December 11, 2019.

⁸² Mark Follman, Gavin Aronsen, and Deanna Pan, "[A Guide to Mass Shootings in America](#)," *Mother Jones*, December 11, 2019.

⁸³ [Mass Attacks in Public Space – 2018](#), U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, July 2019.

⁸⁴ [Mass Attacks in Public Space – 2018](#), U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, July 2019.

⁸⁵ Norris, F.H., Byrne, C., & Diaz, E. (2001). Risk factors for adverse outcomes in natural and human-caused disasters: A review of the empirical literature.

Norris, F.H., Friedman, M. J., & Watson, P. J. (2002). 60,000 disaster victims speak: Part II. Summary and implications of the disaster mental health research. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes*, 65(3), 240- 260.

⁸⁶ Tara S. Hughes, "Mass Violence," testimony presented to the Special Council on Gun Violence, November 21, 2019.

- a. Expand Pennsylvania’s current Title 35 mandate to include mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incident preparedness in congregate care setting emergency management plans.
- b. Until changes are adopted in state law, agencies should encourage the inclusion of training, prevention, and response protocols specific to mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incident planning in congregate care settings and communities.

50. Recommendation: Expand the availability of free safety and security assessments through the Pennsylvania State Police Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) program.

- a. The Commonwealth should continue to support expanded capacity of the State Police to conduct assessments that provide recommendations for practical steps that can be taken to better protect different types of facilities, including schools/universities, office buildings, commercial buildings, utility/power plants, malls/shopping centers, arenas/stadiums, amusement parks, fairgrounds, hotels, courthouses, houses of worship, bridges/tunnels, and special events.
- b. Offer trainings through existing programs to address the recommendations identified during security assessments and provide resources to support implementation.

51. Recommendation: Promote proactive planning, coordination, resource mapping, and training to improve timely response by first responders and community members and provide more centralized and coordinated services for individuals affected by mass shootings and other events.

- a. Promote proactive community resource mapping and other strategies that improve coordination of comprehensive services and supports to affected persons in the immediate aftermath of mass casualty events as well as long-term care.
- b. PCCD should develop and share a template for counties and communities to map available services and create plans to address the needs of victims/survivors of gun violence and mass casualty events.
- c. Local communities that develop these plans should identify specific individuals/agencies responsible for maintaining, updating, and sharing information with relevant stakeholders to promote sustainability.
- d. PCCD should explore options for supporting skilled/appropriate community member response (immediate intervention) to incidents of targeted violence, such as Stop the Bleed trainings in communities.
- e. Identify strategies/interventions to reduce response time to mass shootings and other mass casualty events, such as training 911 dispatchers on identifying the specific location of a shooter during an active incident to aid law enforcement response.
- f. Encourage communities to work with county emergency management agencies to plan and conduct trainings/exercises, develop Community Emergency Response Teams, number buildings and doors to reduce response time, share blueprints with local emergency

management and law enforcement agencies, and take other proactive steps to increase preparedness for mass shootings and other mass casualty events.

- g. The Commonwealth should work to foster greater collaboration between Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) providers and ensure they are prepared to address mass shooting and other mass casualty events.

52. Recommendation: Ensure all victims/survivors of mass shootings and other forms of gun violence have timely access to necessary care and support, including financial resources, and identify gaps in existing federal and state funding sources to address insurance-related challenges.

- a. PCCD should review available research and current guidelines for the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and state Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) and identify potential barriers to access for victims/survivors of mass shootings and other firearm-related crimes through these sources (i.e., timelines, eligible expenses, reimbursement caps, funding levels and sources, etc.).
- b. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should work with other state agencies, including the departments of Insurance, Human Services, Health, Corrections, and PSP to explore ways to improve services and supports for victims/survivors of mass shootings and other forms of gun violence.

APPENDIX A: 2019-06 Reducing Gun Violence

EXECUTIVE ORDER Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office	
Subject: Reducing Gun Violence	Number: 2019-06
Date: August 16, 2019	By Direction of: Tom Wolf, Governor

WHEREAS, gun violence in the United States and within this Commonwealth has resulted in the tragic loss of human life; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,600 individuals lost their lives to a firearm death in Pennsylvania in 2017 at a rate higher than the national average, and the number of firearm deaths continues to rise; and

WHEREAS, gun violence is a multi-layered issue that manifests itself as a public health crisis affecting communities across Pennsylvania, resulting in a significant number of suicides and accidental deaths by gun and the growing threat of mass casualty incidents like the domestic terror incident at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, the scourge of gun violence plagues our communities and denigrates our values as Pennsylvanians; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth must be committed to deploying all necessary resources to reduce gun violence and to keep weapons from dangerous individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth must engage in a statewide effort to combat the systemic causes of violence, such as poverty, lack of economic opportunities and mental and behavioral health supports; and

WHEREAS, Sections 501 and 502 of The Administrative Code of 1929 (71 P.S. §§ 181, 182) require administrative departments and the several independent and departmental administrative boards and commissions to coordinate their work and activities with other departments, boards, and commissions.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby order and direct as follows:

1. **Senior Advisor for Gun Violence Prevention.** There is hereby established a Senior Advisor for Gun Violence Prevention (Senior Advisor) who will coordinate the Commonwealth's gun reform agenda. The Senior Advisor shall be appointed by and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
2. **Office of Gun Violence Prevention.** There is hereby established within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) the Office of Gun Violence Prevention (Office),

which shall work to eradicate gun violence from a public safety perspective. The Office will collaborate with the Division of Violence Prevention, coordinate a system of focused police deterrence in neighborhoods and cities where violence is most extreme, and work with other Commonwealth agencies and stakeholders on community gun violence prevention and lost and stolen firearms reporting requirements for law enforcement.

3. **Division of Violence Prevention.** There is hereby established within the Department of Health, the Division of Violence Prevention (Division), which will work to eradicate and prevent gun violence from a public health perspective. The Division will collaborate with the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and administer the Department of Health's new and existing violence prevention programs.
4. **Violence Data Dashboard.** The Department of Health will establish a Violence Data Dashboard (Dashboard) that will collect and provide data on the scope, frequency, locations, and populations affected by violence, including data on the number of victims of gun violence, rates at which gun violence occurs in locations, and contributory factors. The Department of Health will coordinate with and collect data from the Department of Human Services, Pennsylvania State Police, PCCD, and other Commonwealth entities.
5. **Executive Agency Responsibilities.** In addition to the foregoing, the following Commonwealth agencies will provide support to assist in understanding the causes and prevention of gun violence.
 - a. **Department of Health,** in addition to establishing the Dashboard, the Department of Health will establish a Suicide Death Review Team to conduct multidisciplinary reviews of suicides, provide data to the Dashboard, and make recommendations to prevent future suicide-related deaths in Pennsylvania.
 - b. **Department of Human Services** will direct the Suicide Prevention Task Force to make recommendations on actions to reduce suicides by gun.
 - c. **Pennsylvania State Police** will enhance and expand its efforts to identify and deter potential sources of gun violence, develop gun violence prevention training, and draft guidelines for local gun buyback programs.
6. **Special Council on Gun Violence.** There is established within PCCD a Special Council on Gun Violence to study and make recommendations to reduce and prevent gun violence.
 - a. **Council Responsibilities.** The Council shall:
 - (1) Conduct its first meeting within 60 days of this Executive Order.
 - (2) Adopt a public health and community engagement strategy that includes gun owners, health care professionals, and victims of gun-related incidents, that will provide direction, duties, and responsibilities to the Office.
 - (3) Review current background check processes for firearms purchasers and make recommendations for improvement.

- (4) Review best practices and make recommendations that keep weapons from dangerous individuals.
- (5) Identify and define strategies across Commonwealth agencies to align resources to reduce gun violence.
- (6) Provide PCCD and the Senior Advisor with recommendations to reduce incidents of community violence, mass shootings, domestic violence, suicide, and accidental shootings in this Commonwealth within 180 days of the initial meeting of the Council.

b. Composition.

- (1) The Council shall consist of the following members who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Members may appoint designees to serve on their behalf. The Governor will fill vacancies as they occur.
 - (a) Representative of the Children’s Advocacy Center Advisory Committee (CACAC);
 - (b) Representative of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC);
 - (c) Representative of the Mental Health and Justice Advisory Committee (MHJAC);
 - (d) Representative of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee (JJDPC);
 - (e) Representative of the Victims’ Services Advisory Committee (VSAC);
 - (f) Representative of the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC);
 - (g) Representative of the Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Education and Training Board (SDSETB);
 - (h) One representative from each of the four legislative caucuses of the General Assembly;
 - (i) The following Commonwealth Officials:
 - 1. Secretary of Education;
 - 2. Secretary of Health;
 - 3. Secretary of Human Services;
 - 4. State Police Commissioner;
 - 5. Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency;
 - 6. Director of the Office of Homeland Security.
- (2) The Governor may appoint ex officio members to assist the Council as needed. Ex officio members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

- (3) The PCCD Chair shall head the Council and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

c. Council Operations.

- (1) The Council may establish committees, rules, and procedures necessary to effectively fulfill its obligations.
- (2) A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.
- (3) Members of the Council may attend Council meetings in person or virtually by telephone, Skype, or other electronic communications method approved by the Council. Virtual attendance shall be considered attendance for purposes of constituting a quorum.
- (4) The Council will receive administrative services and assistance from PCCD.

- d. Compensation.** Members of the Council shall not receive compensation for their service on the Council, except that members may be entitled to receive reimbursement for reasonable travel costs and expenditures incurred while performing Council business in accordance with the Commonwealth's travel and subsistence policies. The PCCD will pay for the approved travel and subsistence expenses of the Council members who are not Commonwealth employees or officials.

- 7. Implementation.** All Commonwealth agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction are directed to take all steps necessary to implement this Executive Order. Independent agencies are also strongly encouraged to implement this Executive Order.

- 8. Effective Date.** This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Governor.

APPENDIX B: Workgroup Meetings and Public Hearing Dates

Workgroup	Meeting Dates
Preventing Accidental/Unintentional Shootings	Meeting #1 - November 15, 2019 Meeting #2 - January 8, 2020 Meeting #3 - January 15, 2020
Reducing Community Gun Violence Workgroup	Meeting #1 - November 4, 2019 Meeting #2 - December 5, 2019 Meeting #3 - January 8, 2020 Meeting #4 - January 16, 2020
Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings Workgroup	Meeting #1 - November 5, 2019 Meeting #2 - November 25, 2019 Meeting #3 - January 3, 2020 Meeting #4 - January 16, 2020
Combatting Mass Shootings Workgroup	Meeting #1 - November 5, 2019 Meeting #2 - November 21, 2019 Meeting #3 - January 3, 2020 Meeting #4 - January 13, 2020
Preventing Suicide by Firearms Workgroup	Meeting #1 - November 5, 2019 Meeting #2 - November 21, 2019 Meeting #3 - January 3, 2020 Meeting #4 - January 13, 2020

Public Hearings

- November 15, 2019 Reducing the Likelihood of Accidental Shootings (Dallas, PA)
- November 21, 2019 Combatting Mass Shootings (Pittsburgh, PA)
- November 22, 2019 Preventing Suicide by Firearms (York, PA)
- November 25, 2019 Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings (State College, PA)
- December 5, 2019 Reducing Community Gun Violence (Philadelphia, PA)

APPENDIX C: States with Background Check Requirements Exceeding Federal Standards⁸⁷

State	Firearm Type(s)	Additional Timeframes for Completion of Background Checks?	Background Checks at Point of Sale/ Transfer?	Permit for Firearm Purchases after Background Checks?	Background Checks Specific to Gun Shows?
California	All Firearms	Yes; 30 days	Yes	No	No
Colorado	All Firearms	Yes; 30 days (under some circumstances)	Yes	No	No
Connecticut	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 90 days for handguns, 60 days for long guns	Yes	Yes	No
Delaware	All Firearms	No	Yes	No	No
District of Columbia	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 60 days	Yes	Yes	No
Florida	All Firearms	Yes; indefinitely until required background checks are complete			
Hawaii	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 20 days	No	Yes	No
Illinois	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 30 days	No	Yes	Yes
Iowa	Handguns only	No	No	Yes	No
Maryland	Handguns and modern style rifles only	Yes (license req.); 30 days (handguns only)	Yes	Yes	No
Massachusetts	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 40 days	No	Yes	No
Michigan	Handguns only	No	No	Yes	No
Minnesota	Handguns and modern style rifles only	Yes (waiting period); 7 days			
Nebraska	Handguns only	No	No	Yes	No
Nevada	All Firearms	No	Yes	No	No
New Jersey	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 30 days (45 days for non-residents)	Yes	Yes	No
New Mexico	All Firearms	No	Yes (sale only)	No	No
New York	All Firearms	Yes (license req.); 180 days (handguns only)	Yes	Yes	No
North Carolina	Handguns only	Yes (license req.); 14 days (handguns only)	No	Yes	No
Oregon	All Firearms	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pennsylvania	Handguns only	Yes; indefinitely to determine whether a disqualifying misdemeanor conviction involved in domestic violence	Yes	No	No
Rhode Island	All Firearms	Yes (waiting period); 7 days	Yes	Yes (<i>handguns only</i>)	No
Tennessee	All Firearms	Yes; up to 15 days if purchaser has been charged			

⁸⁷ Adapted from *Universal Background Checks*, Giffords Law Center, <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/background-checks/universal-background-checks/> and *Background Check Procedures*, Giffords Law Center, <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/background-checks/background-check-procedures/>.

State	Firearm Type(s)	Additional Timeframes for Completion of Background Checks?	Background Checks at Point of Sale/ Transfer?	Permit for Firearm Purchases after Background Checks?	Background Checks Specific to Gun Shows?
		with a crime and there has been no final disposition			
Utah	All Firearms	Yes; indefinite until background check clears			
Vermont	All Firearms	No	Yes	No	No
Virginia	All Firearms	No	No	No	Yes (<i>voluntary</i>)
Washington	All Firearms	Yes; 10 days for long guns; up to 60 days for handguns	Yes	No	No

APPENDIX D: States Requiring Firearm Loss/Theft Reporting⁸⁸

State	Reporting Requirement	Timeframe	Citation
California	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearms to local law enforcement within a timeframe of when they knew, or reasonably should have known, their firearms were lost/stolen. Local law enforcement must then transmit a description of any lost/stolen firearm to the California Dept. of Justice electronically.	5 days	Cal. Pen. Code § 25250, <i>et seq.</i> California's reporting requirement was enacted through voters' passage of Proposition 63 in November 2016.
Connecticut	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement	72 hours	Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53-202g
Delaware	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearms to either local or state law enforcement.	7 days	Del. Code tit. 11, § 1461.
District of Columbia	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement, including a report of circumstances of the loss/theft, if known, in writing. Registration certificates are revoked if the owner fails to report a lost/stolen firearm a second time, then prohibiting the individual from possessing a firearm for 5 years.	Immediate	D.C. Code Ann. § 7-2502.08(a), (e).
Hawaii	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement	24 hours	Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 134-29.
Illinois	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement, with law enforcement then entering information into a statewide database.	72 hours	720 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/24-4.1
Maryland	Reporting of lost/stolen handguns and assault weapons/modern sporting rifles, with law enforcement then entering information into state and federal databases.	72 hours	Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety § 5-146. 2013 Md. S.B. 281 (effective October 1, 2013).
Massachusetts	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm "forthwith" to State Police and the local licensing authority, with penalties including suspension or permanent revocation of the owner's firearm ID card or license to carry firearms.	Immediate	Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, § 129C.
Michigan	Reporting of <u>theft of firearms only</u> to local law enforcement with jurisdiction over the theft.	5 days	Mich. Comp. Laws § 28.430.
New Jersey	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement where the loss or theft occurred, or to the Superintendent of State Police if the locality has no police force. In addition, registered owners of assault weapons/modern sporting rifles are civilly liable if the assault weapon/modern sporting rifle was stolen and not reported to law enforcement within 24 hours.	24-36 hours	N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:58-19; § 2C:58-12(g).
New York	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearm to local law enforcement, including a report of "the facts and circumstances of the loss or theft," such as whether ammunition was stolen, too.	24 hours	N.Y. Penal Law § 400.10.
Ohio	Penalizes individuals who knowingly fail to report "forthwith" any lost or stolen firearms in	Immediate	Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2923.20(A)(5).

⁸⁸ Adapted from *Reporting Lost & Stolen Guns*, Giffords Law Center, accessed 12/28/2019, <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-owner-responsibilities/reporting-lost-stolen-guns/>.

	the person's possession or control to local law enforcement.		
Rhode Island	Reporting of any lost/stolen firearms to local law enforcement.	24 hours	R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-47-48.1.
Washington	Liability for Stolen Firearms – <i>Individual who owns a firearm and does not report it lost/stolen can be found guilty of community endangerment due to unsafe storage of a firearm if a prohibited individual gains access to a firearm they own. Note: This liability does not apply if the firearm was safely stored.</i>	5 days	Washington Initiative 1639