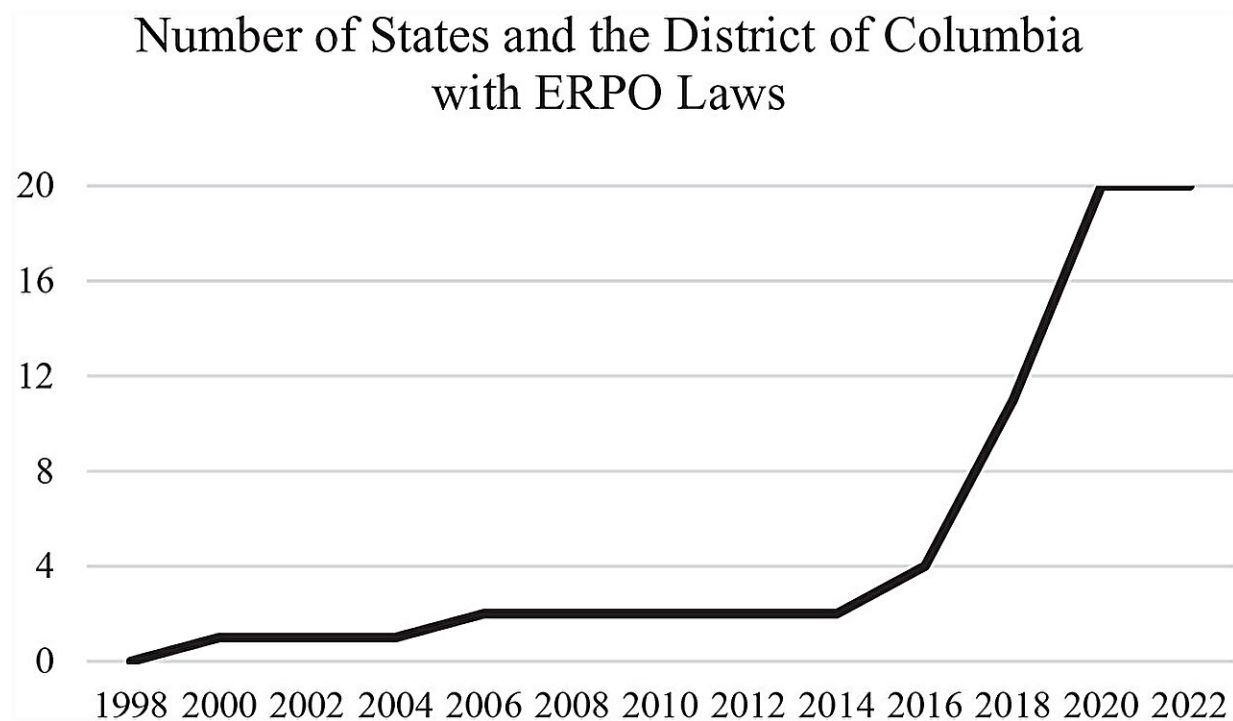


Properly implemented firearm access policies are effective at reducing injury, study finds

August 14 2023, by Kate Barnes



Proliferation of ERPO Laws across States and the District of Columbia over Time. Credit: *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2023). DOI: 10.1177/00027162231165149

When evidence-based firearm injury prevention policies such as extreme risk protection orders are implemented properly, they can play a significant role in preventing gun-related injuries and death, according to

a new scientific policy review led by the University of Michigan Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention.

The study, published in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, reveals common challenges in implementation processes for firearm injury prevention policies.

In order to determine a policy's effectiveness, researchers found it's crucial to carefully consider and identify gaps in the processes of granting and enforcing extreme risk protection orders, or ERPOs, and [domestic violence](#) restraining orders, DVROs, and other firearms safety policies and laws.

Policies should utilize evidence-based strategies that seek to restrict access to firearms for individuals who are deemed to be at high risk for future gun violence, or be considered a danger to themselves or others. Purchaser licensing laws are a way to enforce those restrictions by requiring that an individual obtain a license from local authorities to purchase a firearm.

According to the review, in many states that have passed ERPO laws, the number of petitions issued has been low due to unfamiliarity with the law, lack of knowledge about when to petition for an ERPO and confusion around necessary evidence needed to issue the petition.

Similarly, DVRO laws that include a firearm restriction see varied outcomes based on whether they include dating partners and temporary orders, and whether the court is authorized to order relinquishment of guns already possessed, the researchers say.

Although laws that include these provisions are associated with a 12%-14% decrease in total intimate partner homicide, more data is necessary to determine whether the laws further reduce firearm violence

risk, if and when they are fully implemented, they say.

"It is inarguable that more research is needed on both the implementation and outcomes of these gun safety laws," said April Zeoli, associate professor of health management and policy at U-M's School of Public Health, and policy core director at the Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention.

"However, the research that we currently have is compelling. Research has shown that well-implemented firearm policy that is based on evidence-based risk factors can be effective in reducing all types of firearm injury."

The findings also show that, when implemented properly, [background checks](#) at point of sale keep those prohibited from possessing a firearm from obtaining one. However, states that adopt these laws do not necessarily see a decrease in rates of violence, indicating inadequate implementation processes. Purchaser licensing laws, however, see more robust decreases in firearm violence rates.

Each [policy](#) has been found to have unique challenges, most notably inconsistent enforcement, that likely decrease effectiveness compared to policies that have been fully and properly implemented as intended.

Zeoli and colleagues also note that future work in this space should identify and assess relationships between firearm injury prevention policies and whether and how a combination of policies can best identify and restrict gun access to high risk individuals in an equitable way to prevent [firearm injury](#) and death.

More information: April M. Zeoli et al, Effectiveness of Firearm Restriction, Background Checks, and Licensing Laws in Reducing Gun Violence, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social*

Science (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/00027162231165149](https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162231165149)

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