

Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that public policies should be guided by credible, evidence-based research. NAMI supports Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) that focus on specific, current behaviors and evidence-based risk factors for violence. NAMI opposes any ERPO laws that target, single out, or discriminate against people with mental health conditions.

Why We Care:

ERPOs are civil court orders issued by judges to temporarily remove firearms or ammunition from people who are identified as posing immediate or imminent risks to the safety of themselves or others. When appropriately implemented, these laws can be lifesaving.

Following incidents of mass violence, public opinion and dialogue often centers around mental illness as the culprit. This discussion reinforces long standing, unfounded negative stereotypes linking mental illness with violence. Most people with serious mental illness are never violent toward others and are more often victims of violence than perpetrators. Moreover, only 4% of violent acts in the U.S. are attributed to mental illness. Research tells us that other factors — such as a history of violence, misuse

of alcohol or drugs, or prior convictions for violent misdemeanors — are greater predictors of violence.

NAMI opposes any ERPO laws that target, single out, or discriminate against people with mental health conditions.

Furthermore, the discussion of gun violence prevention is not complete without addressing the issue of suicide. Suicide is a significant public health crisis in the U.S. and firearms are the most common method of death by suicide. ERPO can reduce the risk of firearm suicide by temporarily removing firearms from someone at serious risk of harming themselves.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities