



Safety From Gun Violence

For too long, too many politicians have offered only thoughts and prayers after mass shootings, instead of offering up real solutions to keep our communities safe. Donald Trump and Cory Gardner have stood with the NRA and their allies in opposition to comprehensive gun safety laws. Cory Gardner is one of the top five recipients of money from the NRA in the entire Senate for a simple reason: he will always stand up for gun manufacturers and against common sense reforms.

Cory has refused to take bold action to protect our families from gun violence, voting against expanding background checks and against keeping guns away from people on the terrorist watch list.

We in Colorado are too familiar with what this failure to act has done to our communities. April marked 20 years since the tragedy at Columbine High School. The two decades since have been full of more pain and suffering, from Aurora to Arapahoe. And just last week, the community buried a courageous student whose actions saved his fellow classmates at STEM School Highlands Ranch.

We grieve alongside so many of our fellow Americans, from the parents mourning a child lost to suicide or a school shooting, to teachers burying their own students lost to gang violence. And as with so many of our toughest problems, people of color pay the steepest price: black and Hispanic men account for more than [47%](#) of Colorado's gun violence victims even though they account for only 13% of the state's population. The statistics are painful and haunting. But there is a lot we can do. We just need the courage to do it.

That's why I took on the NRA as a state Senator, and won. They did everything they could to intimidate me and my colleagues. But I wasn't afraid of the NRA then and I'm not afraid of them now. And unlike Cory Gardner, who is bought and paid for by the NRA, I've actually passed gun safety measures in the State Senate, and am ready to take that fight nationwide as Colorado's next Senator.

Here is what we can do:

Implement universal background checks for every gun purchase, everywhere.

Nobody should be able to buy a gun in America without passing a background check. Period. Unfortunately, in too many states, some convicted felons, domestic abusers, and other dangerous individuals prohibited by law from purchasing firearms currently are able to get their hands on a gun with no questions asked if they buy it from an unlicensed seller. These dangerous transactions take place in parking lots, at gun shows, and online across the country.

We must implement universal background checks in order to close this dangerous loophole. Americans from across the political spectrum overwhelmingly agree on this, yet Cory Gardner refuses to support legislation that would take this commonsense step to keep our communities safe.

Ban assault weapons.

We have seen the horrific damage that assault weapons can inflict upon innocent civilians: Parkland, Las Vegas, Pulse, Sandy Hook -- just to name a few. There is simply no good reason for everyday Americans to have access to these weapons of war that are designed to kill humans quickly and efficiently. We need a national assault weapons ban to protect our families.

One of the most important parts of an assault weapons ban is banning high capacity magazines. I successfully worked with my colleagues to ban high-capacity magazines in Colorado, and we must do this nationally. What kills kids the fastest are the 30-, 50-, 100-round magazines that are only designed for mass slaughter. I will fight to ban these as part of our comprehensive assault weapons ban.

Prevent domestic abusers, stalkers, and those convicted of hate crimes from getting guns.

It is far too easy for domestic abusers to access guns, and the results are often deadly: abused women are [five times](#) more likely to be killed by their abuser if their abuser owns a firearm. [More than half](#) of the women murdered in 2017 were killed by intimate partners or family members. This must end.

I fought hard for SB-197, taking on the gun lobby to help pass a law in 2013 to keep guns from domestic abusers. This law [requires](#) courts in Colorado to order anyone subject to a domestic violence protection order or convicted of domestic violence to relinquish their guns within 24 hours. We must spread this across the country. And we must go further. We must do more to keep guns from those who have been convicted of stalking, one of the strongest indicators of future violence in a relationship. The so-called "[boyfriend loophole](#)," thanks to the protection of the NRA, allows those who have been convicted of stalking or physical assault, but are not living with or do not have a child with their victims, to own a gun. This is indefensible and puts Colorado women at risk. I will fight to change this.

Finally, we must ensure that those who have demonstrated a willingness to act on hate not be trusted with guns. A 2018 FBI report [found](#) that the number of hate crime incidents reported to the FBI has increased about 17 percent from 2014 to 2017. Our country is still struggling to heal from the wounds of the hate-fueled massacres at Charleston Emanuel AME church, the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. The threat is clear and so is the solution: we must make sure that those who commit hate crimes cannot access guns.

Pass a national Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Law.

ERPOs allow law enforcement officers – and in some cases family members or teachers – to petition a court to temporarily remove a person's guns if that person poses an imminent threat to themselves or others. ERPOs ensure that dangerous individuals do not have access to guns until the threat is resolved.

More than half of suicide deaths in this country are with firearms, and ERPOs are particularly effective at preventing these deaths. Connecticut passed a similar law in 1999, and a [2016 study](#) estimated that for every 10 to 20 guns removed, one suicide was prevented. ERPOs protect all of us and help families keep loved ones alive during their darkest times.

Fourteen states and Washington, D.C. now have some form of ERPO, including [eight](#) that were enacted in 2018 alone. ERPOs have attracted support from across the political spectrum. We need to support every state that enacts such laws with implementation grants and technical assistance, tied to a full faith and credit clause to ensure that nobody subject to an ERPO in one state can cross a border and harm someone in another state.

Pass a national Child Access Prevention Law.

A 2018 [study](#) found that more than four million children live in homes with unsecured, loaded firearms, increasing the risk of shootings, accidental gunshots, and suicides. A [2004](#) U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education analysis on school shootings found sixty-five percent of school shootings involved a firearm obtained from the home or from family members.

As a U.S. Senator, I will fight to require gun owners with kids living in the home to store weapons in a safe, locked place. If owners fail to do this and their gun is used in a shooting by the child they will be held accountable. It's time to take this national.

Protect our children in school.

Too many parents in Colorado and around this country have endured the devastation of losing a child to an act of violence committed at school, a place where we must insist all children can be safe as they learn and grow.

Mark Barden lost his son Daniel in the Sandy Hook shooting on December 14, 2012. Daniel was six years old. Mark's grief drove him to work tirelessly to prevent this tragedy from happening to other families. He discovered that in the vast majority of cases of school violence, there are warning signs. If teachers and students have the tools to recognize and address these warning signs, they can prevent tragedy. Mark created the Sandy Hook Promise to develop evidence-based tools to prevent violence, help schools implement these best practices, and save countless lives.

I will fight to enact The Sandy Hook Promise's three key strategies that can prevent school violence and protect our kids:

- First, I would help schools to develop threat assessment plans for gun violence in schools.
- Second, I would help all schools to provide suicide prevention training to teachers, administrators, and students.
- Third, I would establish an anonymous reporting system that would be free and accessible to all schools, parents, teachers, students, and administrators all across the country. This system would be 24/7, completely anonymous, and support school and district leadership in using the absolute best, evidence-based strategies to respond to, and prevent, a potential crisis. In addition I will push for improved mental health services for all, especially our young students.

We are already scarred by the enduring horrific violence in our schools. We need to do absolutely everything we can to prevent our young, bright lives from being cut short.

Fund research to develop the best safety policies.

Gun violence is a public health crisis that took almost [40,000](#) American lives last year. If this were any other public health scourge we'd be directing public dollars to research new solutions. But instead, the NRA has blocked this important work, leaving good solutions on the table. I will fight to fund research so that we can develop the best possible policies to fight this crisis.

None of us should fear dropping our kids off at schools or walking into a movie. But that's our reality today, thanks to the politicians like Cory Gardner and Donald Trump. It's time for a change in leadership and a change in our gun safety laws.