



Resolution to Endorse and Promote Fairfax County's
Prevent A Gun Tragedy – Speak Up!
Red Flag Law Public Awareness Campaign

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Whereas, on April 8, 2021, President Joe Biden spoke in favor of public awareness of red flag laws; [1]

Whereas, in 2020, the government of Virginia passed the Emergency Substantial Risk Order (ESRO) , which enable a commonwealth’s attorney or law enforcement personnel to apply to a civil court to order the temporary removal of a gun or guns from a person who presents a substantial risk of harm to him or herself or others, and bars them from buying or possessing a gun; [2,5,8]

Whereas, findings from a JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) study published in 2021 found that nearly half “leaked” their plans, prior to their act [3], suggesting that there is a critical moment for an intervention to prevent gun violence but for that to happen, people must speak up;

Whereas, two-thirds of gun deaths in America are suicides; and Everytown for Gun Safety writes on its website that “evidence shows that temporarily removing guns from people in crisis can reduce the risk of firearm suicide. Firearm suicide is a significant public health crisis in the United States; [6]

Whereas, gun safety groups such as Everytown for Gun Safety and its grassroots volunteer arm, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, that have been working diligently to raise awareness about red flag laws in states that have them and advocate for the passage of such laws in states that do not and applaud Everytown’s ‘One Thing You Can Do’ campaign is to educate the public about how they can potentially save lives using red flag laws;

Whereas, in 2021, Safer Country, the Alexandria-based gun violence prevention nonprofit, with the leadership of Lee District Supervisor and Public Safety Committee Chair Rodney Lusk, successfully initiated a red flag law public awareness campaign with the government of Fairfax County;

Whereas, the ad hoc Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs committee created to follow through adopted the slogan ***Prevent A Gun Tragedy – Speak Up!***, has used staff resources to create a webpage and a signage campaign; [9,10]

Whereas, the public awareness campaign was launched with a Fairfax County press conference and two Safer Country Washington Post Op/Ed's and will soon include signage and a digital advertising strategy; [7]

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Alexandria Democratic Committee hereby endorses and urges the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in the alternative, every local Virginia jurisdiction to adopt Fairfax County's red flag law public awareness campaign, including its message, ***Prevent A Gun Tragedy – Speak Up!*** and the funding needed to promote knowledge of the campaign, in order to save lives.

Footnotes

- 1) www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/joe-biden-merrick-garland-press-conference-transcript-action-on-gun-violence-prevention:

[“Every day in this country, 316 people are shot. Every single day. 106 of them die every day. Our flag was still flying at half-staff for the victims of the horrific murder of eight primarily Asian-American people in Georgia when 10 more lives were taken in a mass murder in Colorado.](#)

[“...\[D\]uring my campaign for president, I wanted to make it easier for states to adopt extreme risk protection order laws. They're also called “red flag laws,” which everybody in this lawn knows, but many people listening do not know \[about them.\]](#)

[These laws allow police or a family member to petition a court in their jurisdiction and say, “I want you to temporarily remove from the following people any firearm they may possess because they're a danger and a crisis. They're presenting a danger to themselves and to others.”](#)

[“To put this in perspective more than half of all suicides, for example, involve the use of a firearm. But when a gun is not available an attempt at suicide, the death rate drops precipitously. States that have Red Flag Laws have seen the reduction in the number of suicides in their states.](#)

[“Every single month ... an average of 53 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. We know red flag laws can have a significant effect in protecting women from domestic violence. And we know red flag laws can stop mass shooters before they can act out their violent plans.](#)

- 2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_flag_law#:~:text=Three%20other%20states%20enacted%20red,legislation%2

[0on%20February%2025%2C%202020.](#)

- 3) <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2785799>
- 4) <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/senators-release-text-bipartisan-gun-bill-seek-final-passage-week-rcna34404>

https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/25/politics/biden-signs-gun-bill/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2oBdjMPwiYWj74gVsij_we6CMBm_jrrbCry-gnCzPmhG_xNQ0Smc93iGI

- 5) <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/19.2-152.13/>
- 6) <https://everytownresearch.org/report/extreme-risk-laws-save-lives/>

“Among commonly used methods of self-harm, firearms are by far the most lethal, with a fatality rate of approximately 90 percent, whereas, 4 percent of people who attempt suicide using other methods die. The vast majority of survivors of a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide. Research shows that access to a firearm triples one’s risk of death by suicide. This elevated risk of harm applies not only to the gun owner but also to everyone in the household.”

- 7) www.safercountry.org/media/
- 8) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/07/14/heres-how-make-red-flag-laws-most-effective-against-gun-violence/>
- 9) www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/red-flag, which was then added to this new webpage –
- 10) www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/resources-to-help-prevent-gun-violence on the Fairfax County government website;