



**Special Council on Gun Violence**  
Report of Findings, Recommendations & Action Steps

March 2020



March 11, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

Thank you for the privilege to serve as your Special Advisor, and for asking me to chair your Special Council on Gun Violence. When you signed your Executive Order last August, you tasked the Special Council with identifying steps Pennsylvania can take to address gun violence as a public health crisis and improve the quality of safety and security throughout the Commonwealth. In doing so, you challenged us to look at available research and data to identify promising practices and, most importantly, to listen to our fellow Pennsylvanians.

Since our first meeting in October, my colleagues on the Special Council have worked diligently to understand the scope of gun violence in the Commonwealth and develop the enclosed *Report of Findings, Recommendations & Action Steps* to prevent further tragic loss of life. I am grateful to these individuals for sharing their time, perspectives, and expertise in this important endeavor.

In that process, Special Council members heard from hundreds of Pennsylvanians – from surgeons who have stitched together bullet hole wounds, to faith leaders who console families and communities in the wake of unimaginable loss and grief, to students who worry about going to school each morning. We listened to survivors and perpetrators of gun violence, and to those who believe the constitutional right to keep and bear arms must be preserved.

This process also welcomed and encouraged dissenting thoughts. And while the enclosed report was the result of consensus, some members of the Council embraced that spirit of dissent and offered their own written opinions. (Note: Those comments can be found in Appendix J.)

In a world that seems increasingly characterized by division, I was proud that our work was collaborative, thoughtful, and respectful. It is in that spirit of cooperation and with a hope for what is possible that these findings, recommendations, and action steps are presented. It is a testament to the practical, problem-solving nature of Pennsylvanians. And it focuses on what's possible here in this Commonwealth and in our communities – because it's up to all of us to do what we can to make a better Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Charles H. Ramsey  
Chair, Special Council on Gun Violence  
Chairman, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Special Council on Gun Violence Members</b> .....	4
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	5
<b>Executive Summary of Recommendations</b> .....	6
<b>About the Special Council on Gun Violence</b> .....	10
<b>Firearm Ownership &amp; Regulation in Pennsylvania</b> .....	11
<b>Gun Violence: A Public Health &amp; Public Safety Concern</b> .....	18
<b>Findings, Recommendations &amp; Action Steps</b> .....	23
I. Prevention .....	26
II. Keeping Firearms Out of the Wrong Hands .....	36
III. Mental Health .....	45
IV. Community Gun Violence.....	50
V. Training & Education.....	57
VI. Coordinated Planning & Response .....	59
VII. Informing Better Policies & Practices.....	63
<b>Appendix A: Key Terms and Definitions</b> .....	65
<b>Appendix B: Executive Order 2019-06 – Reducing Gun Violence</b> .....	68
<b>Appendix C: Workgroup Meetings and Public Hearing Dates</b> .....	72
<b>Appendix D: Sales and Transfers of Firearms by Licensed Dealers by County, 2013-2018</b> .....	73
<b>Appendix E: Licenses to Carry Firearms Issued by County, 2013-2018</b> .....	77
<b>Appendix F: States with Licensing Requirements for Firearm Purchase or Possession</b> .....	79
<b>Appendix G: States with Lost or Stolen Firearm Reporting Requirements</b> .....	80
<b>Appendix H: States with Background Check Requirements Exceeding Federal Standards</b> .	82
<b>Appendix I: States with Safe Storage and/or Child Access Prevention Laws</b> .....	85
<b>Appendix J: Written Comments from Special Council Members</b> .....	93

## SPECIAL COUNCIL ON GUN VIOLENCE MEMBERS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PCCD would also like to thank the organizations and institutions that served as hosts for stakeholder conversations, including Misericordia University, University of Pittsburgh, York City School District, Pennsylvania State University, Temple University, and the Dixon University Center at the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE).

In addition, PCCD thanks state agencies that assisted the Special Council in its efforts to access available data and identify promising practices and recommendations, including the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), and Pennsylvania State Police.

Finally, PCCD would like to express appreciation for the skillful facilitation and research support provided by staff from SAI and MION Consulting.

**Note: Inclusion of individuals and their organizational affiliations serves as recognition of service and does not imply endorsement of this report by any specific individuals or organizations.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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### I. PREVENTION: STOPPING GUN VIOLENCE BEFORE IT BEGINS

#### Primary Prevention & Youth Engagement Strategies

1. Support and elevate effective, collaborative community-based practices to prevent gun violence in the Commonwealth. *(p. 26)*
2. Increase availability of 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. *(p. 27)*
3. Reduce risk factors associated with gun violence by removing barriers to education, training, and employment and creating opportunities for good-paying jobs. *(pp. 27-28)*

#### Promoting Safer Gun Ownership Practices

4. Increase the number of adults, especially those living in households with children, participating in evidence-informed firearm safety education, awareness, and training programs. *(pp. 28-29)*
5. 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). *(pp. 29-30)*

#### Increasing Public Awareness & Understanding of Gun Violence

6. Promote awareness of gun violence and action steps individuals and communities can take to improve public health and safety through a comprehensive statewide communications strategy. *(p. 30)*

#### Preventing Suicide by Firearms

7. Invest in evidence-informed suicide prevention programs, mental health, and counseling services, as well as training and technical assistance. *(pp. 31-32)*

#### Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings

8. Support voluntary statewide adoption of the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) model by counties and the Pennsylvania State Police. *(pp. 32-33)*
9. Recognizing the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, the Commonwealth should bolster comprehensive supports and protections for victims/survivors. *(pp. 33)*

10. Analyze potential benefits and consequences of establishing a criminal definition of “domestic violence” in Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of Pennsylvania’s Consolidated Statutes. *(pp. 33-34)*

### **Combatting Mass Shootings**

11. To prevent contagion and reduce notoriety, adopt an official statewide position that mass shooters’ names will not be released unless public safety or other relevant requirements demand it (i.e., shooter is still at large). *(p. 35)*

## **II. KEEPING FIREARMS OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS: PREVENTING SITUATIONS WHERE GUNS CAN BE USED TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS**

### **Background Checks**

12. Explore amendments to modernize the Uniform Firearms Act and close loopholes that put law-abiding Pennsylvanians at risk for purchasing or selling firearms from or to bad actors. *(p. 37)*
13. Close the “boyfriend loophole” by extending existing firearm restrictions to include current and former dating partners convicted of certain offenses. *(p. 38)*
14. Amend Pennsylvania’s Mental Health Procedures Act to close loopholes in current background check processes and require immediate electronic reporting of involuntary mental health commitments to law enforcement. *(pp. 38-39)*

### **Preventing Unauthorized Access to Lawfully Owned Firearms**

15. Increase adoption of safer firearm storage and design practices by reducing cost, improving awareness, and leveraging advances in technology. *(pp. 39-40)*
16. The Commonwealth should explore enacting legislation requiring the safer handling and storage of firearms, including Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws. *(pp. 40-41)*
17. Require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms to law enforcement. *(pp.41-42)*

### **Reducing Access to Firearms for Dangerous Individuals and People in Crisis**

18. Increase options for Pennsylvanians to reduce access to firearms for themselves or a loved one when they are concerned about safety. *(pp. 42-43)*
19. Examine impact and implementation of Act 79 of 2018, which established new requirements and procedures for firearm relinquishment in cases of Protection From Abuse orders and conviction of the misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. *(pp. 43-44)*

### III. MENTAL HEALTH: INTERSECTIONS OF TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE & GUN VIOLENCE

#### Promoting Trauma-Informed Systems & Healing Centered Engagement

20. The Commonwealth should support trauma-informed systems and healing centered engagement approaches as models for supporting communities, survivors, and individuals who have experienced trauma and violence, including gun violence. *(p. 46)*

#### Expanding Access to Mental Health Supports and Services

21. Increase investments in mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services, especially in rural communities. *(p. 47)*
22. Reduce stigma and promote resiliency and wellness among professionals working in public health, public safety, law enforcement, health and human services, and related systems. *(p. 48)*

#### Pathways to Restoration of Gun Rights

23. Address concerns related to unintended consequences of firearm prohibitions for individuals with involuntary mental health commitments. *(pp. 48-49)*

### IV. COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

#### Building Trust & Legitimacy

24. Develop and implement strategies that build trust and promote better accountability between law enforcement, public health and human services, and other agencies and the communities they serve. *(p. 51)*

#### Addressing Illegal Guns and Firearm-Related Crimes

25. State and local law enforcement agencies should continue to work together and with communities to identify effective and practical strategies for addressing illegal guns and preventing firearm-related crime. *(p. 52)*
26. State and local law enforcement should work with federal partners to explore strategies to reduce the number of unsolved homicides by firearms in the Commonwealth. *(pp. 52-53)*
27. Explore evidence-informed pre-trial interventions and supports that provide alternative pathways for individuals arrested with firearm-related offenses, if appropriate. *(pp. 53-54)*
28. Strengthen pre-release interventions, services, and supports for individuals convicted of firearm-related offenses and provide comprehensive reentry programs for returning citizens. *(p. 54)*



## Supporting Effective Community-Based Initiatives

29. Prioritize direct, multi-year investments in effective community-led efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence and address resource disparities. *(pp. 54-55)*
30. 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. *(pp. 55-56)*

## V. TRAINING & EDUCATION: ENHANCING PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & RESPONSE SKILLS

### Improving Responses to Crises & Traumatic Events

31. Increase training for professionals serving in key systems on issues like trauma, de-escalation, lethal means reduction, and identifying dynamics of power and control, among other concerns. *(pp. 57-58)*

## VI. COORDINATED PLANNING & RESPONSE: ENHANCING PREPARATION, MITIGATION, RESPONSE & RECOVERY EFFORTS

### Threat Assessment & Management

32. Increase use of threat assessment and management practices to identify and mitigate risks in communities. *(p. 60)*

### Emergency Planning & Response Efforts

33. Improve capacity to provide timely, comprehensive and high-quality responses to critical incidents, including gun violence, by promoting proactive cross-systems planning, resource mapping, and training for first responders and community members. *(pp. 60-61)*

### Providing Coordinated, Person-Centered Care

34. Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered, trauma-informed “Warm Handoff” model. *(pp. 61-62)*

## VII. INFORMING BETTER POLICIES & PRACTICES: SUPPORTING GUN VIOLENCE DATA COLLECTION, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

### Enhancing Quality & Availability of Data Related to Firearms

35. Significantly increase investments in data collection, reporting, analyses, and research focused on fatal and nonfatal firearm-related injuries and crimes. *(pp. 63-64)*

## ABOUT THE SPECIAL COUNCIL ON GUN VIOLENCE

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Signed on August 16, 2019, Executive Order 2019-06 tasks state agencies in the Governor's jurisdiction, including 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.<sup>1</sup>

The Order creates new entities within state government to help advance 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 representatives from public health, public safety, law enforcement, victim services, education, human services, criminal and juvenile justice, research institutions, as well as state and local government. The Governor's Special Advisor on Gun Violence and PCCD Chairman Charles H. Ramsey chairs the Special Council.

The Council's responsibilities included:

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 the Commission 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. Over the course of the next four months, the Council initiated a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy to better understand the root causes of gun violence, as well as identify potential solutions, through public hearings, workgroups, and an online public comment survey.

An initial report of findings and workgroup recommendations was presented to the Special Council for its review and consideration during the January 29, 2020 meeting.<sup>1</sup> On February 26, 2020, the Special Council reviewed and reached consensus on this report's findings, recommendations, and action steps.<sup>2</sup> A copy of this report was presented to the Governor and the Commission during its March 11, 2020 meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Appendix B includes a copy of the full text of Executive Order 2019-06 for reference.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Some members of the Special Council on Gun Violence provided written comments responding to the recommendations and action steps included within this report. Copies of that correspondence are included in Appendix J.

## FIREARM OWNERSHIP & REGULATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

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***“The right of the citizens to bear arms in defense of themselves and the State shall not be questioned.”***

- Article I, Section 21, Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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. The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, “[A] well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Article I of Pennsylvania’s Constitution (§21) states that “[t]he right of the citizens to bear arms in defense of themselves and the State shall not be questioned.”

While these rights are fundamental, they are not absolute. Consistent with its authority to protect the safety of its citizens, the Commonwealth may – and does – regulate firearms and other dangerous items. One of the first laws relating to restricting use of firearms in Pennsylvania was enacted in 1864 to address concerns related to the concealed carry of firearms and other deadly weapons by individuals with intent to harm others.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in 1881, Pennsylvania established minimum age requirements for the sale of firearms and other weapons, and prohibited the sale, possession, or transfer of automatic weapons (“machine guns”) in 1929.<sup>3</sup> The first Uniform Firearms Act was enacted in 1931, which aimed to make handgun regulation more consistent across the Commonwealth and instituted new license to carry provisions, disqualifications of certain individuals, mandatory 48-hour waiting periods to purchase a handgun, and registration of the sale of all handguns.<sup>4</sup>

Under the current Uniform Firearms Act (Chapter 61 of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes), firearms are regulated by type, with handguns generally subject to greater regulation than long-guns.<sup>5</sup> The statute also includes procedures for background checks, disqualifications for individual firearm ownership, restoration of firearm rights, and the required reporting of lost or stolen weapons by licensed firearm dealers only.<sup>6</sup> Firearm purchase, ownership, and possession is also subject to relevant federal laws and regulations.<sup>7</sup>

### Firearm Sales and Transfers

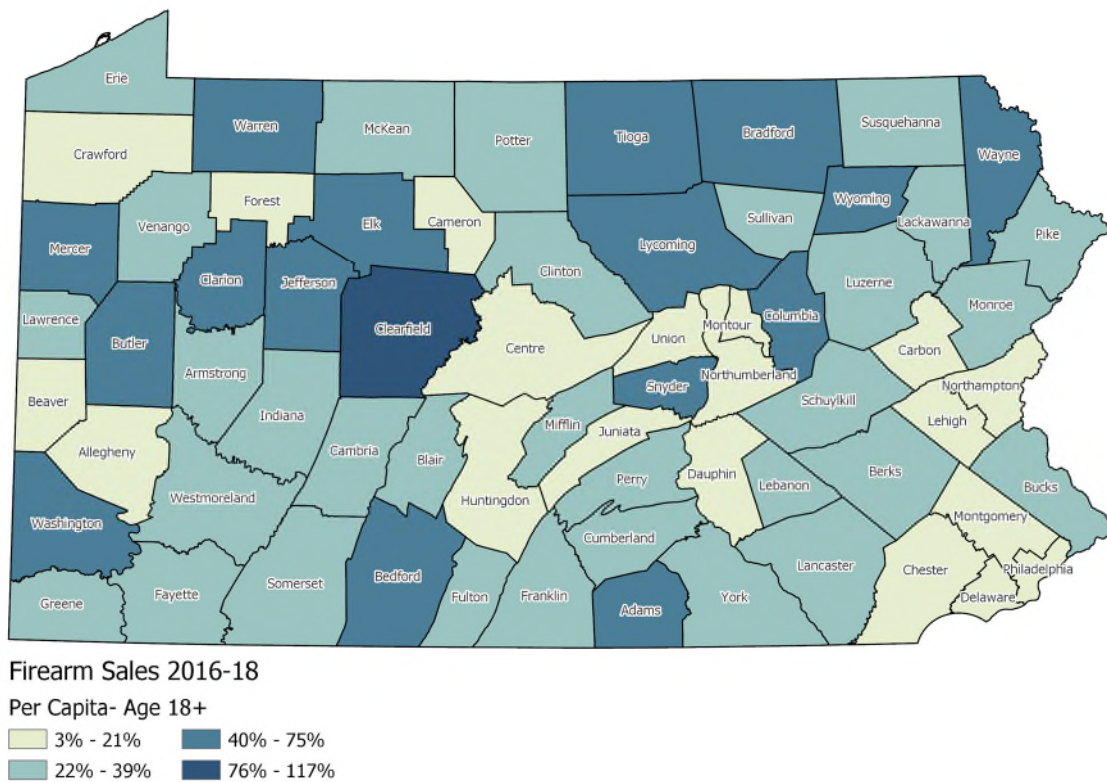
Federal law requires firearms dealers to obtain a license from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).<sup>8</sup> Pennsylvania law requires licensing to sell firearms directly to consumers; these retail firearms dealer licenses are issued by county sheriffs or chiefs of police.<sup>9</sup> As of 2018, there were 2,670 licensed firearm dealers across Pennsylvania.<sup>10</sup>

In 2018, a total of 756,550 firearms were reported purchased or transferred by licensed firearm dealers in Pennsylvania,<sup>11</sup> including:

- 413,756 handguns;
- 323,585 long guns; and
- 19,209 frames/receivers.

Figure 1, below, shows the rate of firearm sales and transfers reported by licensed dealers over a three-year period compared with the adult population by county in Pennsylvania. (Note: This data only reflects sales and transfers of firearms made through licensed dealers in Pennsylvania and does not include private sales and transfers of long guns.)

**Figure 1. Firearm Sales and Transfers by Licensed Dealers by County (2016-2018)<sup>12</sup>**



The rate of gun sales through licensed dealers during this three-year period compared with adult population estimates is highest in Clearfield County (117 firearms sold by dealers for every 100 adult residents) and lowest in Philadelphia County (3 firearms sold by dealers for every 100 adults). A county-by-county breakdown of firearm sales/transfers from 2013-2018 is available in Appendix D.

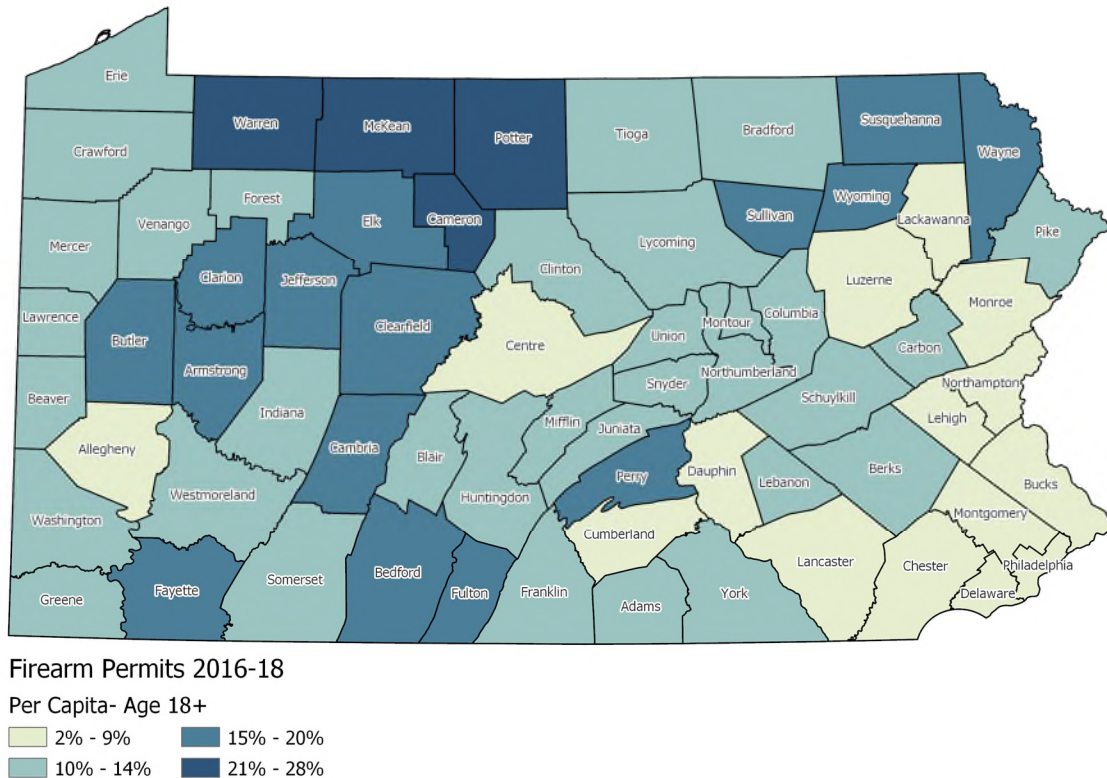
### Licenses to Carry Firearms

Pennsylvania does not require individuals to obtain a license to purchase or possess firearms; however, individuals 21 years and older may apply for a license to carry firearms (also known as “concealed carry”) on their person and in their vehicle. An Application for a Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms must be submitted to their county’s sheriff, or to the chief of police in Philadelphia. The sheriff/chief of police has 45 days to conduct investigations to determine eligibility, including running a background check through PICS, and can deny an individual a License to Carry Firearms

if there is “reason to believe that the character and reputation of the individual are such that they would be likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety.”<sup>13</sup>

According to data from the Pennsylvania State Police provided to the Special Council in December 2019, there are 1,343,155 active licenses to carry concealed handguns in Pennsylvania,<sup>14</sup> including 280,407 licenses issued in 2018.<sup>15</sup> Figure 2, below, shows a breakdown of the total number of concealed carry licenses issued over a three-year period compared with the adult population in each county.

**Figure 2. Licenses to Carry Firearms Issued by County (2016-2018)<sup>16</sup>**



The rate of Licenses to Carry Firearms issued during this three-year period was highest in Potter County (28 licenses to carry issued for every 100 residents) and lowest in Philadelphia County (2 licenses issued for every 100 residents). A county-by-county breakdown of licenses to carry firearms issued from 2013-2018 is available in Appendix E.

### Sportsman’s Firearm Permits

Any person 18 years or older licensed to hunt, trap, or fish or who has been issued a permit relating to hunting dogs may apply for a Sportsman’s Firearm Permit through the County Treasurer’s Office.<sup>17</sup> Once issued, the Permit is valid throughout the Commonwealth for a five-year period for any “legal firearm” when carried in conjunction with a valid hunting, fur taking, or fishing license or permit relating to hunting dogs.<sup>18</sup> In 2018, there were 1,725 Sportsman’s Firearm Permits issued by County Treasurer’s Offices. (Note: Unlike License to Carry Permits, Sportsman’s Firearm Permits do not require a background check).<sup>19</sup>

## Disqualifications

The Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act includes several disqualifications for purchasing, owning, or possessing firearms by certain types of individuals. Section 6105 of the Uniform Firearms Act outlines restrictions for the following convictions and other disqualifying factors:<sup>20</sup>

Disqualifying Convictions	Other Disqualifying Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibited offensive weapons and weapons of mass destruction;</li> <li>• Corrupt organizations;</li> <li>• Possession of weapon on school property;</li> <li>• Murder, voluntary manslaughter, involuntary manslaughter (if based on reckless use of a firearm);</li> <li>• Aggravated assault, assault by prisoner, assault by prisoner serving a life sentence;</li> <li>• Stalking;</li> <li>• Kidnapping, unlawful restraint, luring a child into a motor vehicle or structure;</li> <li>• Rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault;</li> <li>• Arson and related offenses;</li> <li>• Causing or risking a catastrophe;</li> <li>• Burglary, criminal trespass (second degree or higher felony), robbery, robbery of motor vehicle, theft by unlawful taking or disposition (upon second felony conviction), theft by extortion (when accompanied by threats of violence), receiving stolen property (upon second felony conviction);</li> <li>• False reports to law enforcement authorities (if a fictitious report involves the theft of a firearm);</li> <li>• Impersonating a public servant (if impersonating a law enforcement officer);</li> <li>• Intimidation of witnesses or victims, retaliation against witness, victim or party;</li> <li>• Escape and weapons or implements of escape;</li> <li>• Riot;</li> <li>• Prohibiting of paramilitary training;</li> <li>• Possession of firearm by minor;</li> <li>• Corruption of minors;</li> <li>• Sale or lease of weapons and explosives;</li> <li>• Equivalent offenses under prior Commonwealth law, other state law, or federal law.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fugitives from justice;</li> <li>• Persons convicted under federal or state drug laws, if punishment may exceed two years' imprisonment;</li> <li>• Persons convicted of driving under the influence on three or more separate occasions within a five-year period;</li> <li>• Persons adjudicated incompetent or involuntarily committed under the Mental Health Procedures Act;</li> <li>• Undocumented individuals or persons who are unlawfully in the United States;</li> <li>• Persons who are subject to an active protection from abuse (PFA) order (final or temporary) providing for the relinquishment of firearms during the period of time the order is in effect;</li> <li>• Persons adjudicated delinquent for certain violent criminal offenses;</li> <li>• Persons adjudicated delinquent under other Pennsylvania state or federal equivalent laws (temporary); and/or</li> <li>• Persons prohibited from possessing or acquiring a firearm under federal law relating to misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence against certain individuals.</li> </ul>

## Relief from Disability and Restoration of Firearms Rights

The Uniform Firearms Act also identifies circumstances and procedures for providing relief from disability and restoration of firearm rights, including:

- Relief from disability may be granted if the disqualifying conviction is vacated, a full pardon is granted, or if federal relief has been granted and 10 years has elapsed since the most recent conviction (§6105(d));
- Relief may be granted to persons adjudicated incompetent or involuntarily committed if a court determines the person may possess a firearm without risk to that individual or others (§6105(f)); and/or
- Restoration of firearms rights procedure if disqualification resulted from prior laws that had shorter sentences or are no longer legal violations (§6105.1).<sup>21</sup>

In 2018, the Pennsylvania State Police responded to 58 petitions for relief, including 40 petitions related to mental health commitments and 18 petitions for criminal offenses.<sup>22</sup> While state law provides for relief and restoration, it is important to note that individuals who are granted this status through a court in the Commonwealth may also need to obtain relief from a Federal Firearm Act Disability if the offense or criteria is also prohibited under federal law.<sup>23</sup>

## Background Check Procedures (Federal and State)

The federal Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act requires federally licensed firearms dealers (FFLs) conduct background checks on potential firearm purchasers.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> Among other criteria, NICS uses information about individuals' criminal and mental health histories, as well as any civil orders that may affect their eligibility, such as PFA orders.<sup>26</sup>

The Pennsylvania State Police conducts instant records checks through the web-based Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS), established in compliance with the Uniform Firearms Act.<sup>27</sup> Since 1998, Pennsylvania has served as a Point-of-Contact State for the federal NICS system, 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.<sup>28</sup>

In 2018, PICS handled more than one million Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and web-based background checks for FFLs, sheriffs, and law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth, with an overall approval rate of 98%.<sup>29</sup> Since its inception in 1998, the PICS is responsible for the apprehension of 2,437 individuals with active warrants who attempted to acquire a firearm.<sup>30</sup>

## Enforcement of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act

Section 6111(g)(4) of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act provides that any person, purchaser, or transferee who knowingly and intentionally makes false statements (oral or written) or provides false

identification to acquire a firearm from a seller, licensed dealer, or licensed manufacturer commits a felony of the third degree.<sup>31</sup> In 2018, the Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Division initiated 5,363 investigations related to enforcement of this section, leading to the following referrals and initiated investigations:

**Figure 3. Investigations Initiated by PSP Firearms Division in 2018<sup>32</sup>**

Referral Type	Number
Total Referred to PSP Troops	1,920
Total Referred to Municipal Police Departments	3,371
Total Referred to ATF	72

Cumulatively, investigations and enforcement of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act have resulted in the following investigation outcomes and case dispositions over the past two decades.

**Figure 4. Investigation Grant Totals, 1999-2018<sup>33</sup>**

Investigation Outcome	Number
Total Referred	31,564
Arrests Reported	8,046
Convictions Reported	4,170
Prosecutions Declined	7,027
Pending Investigations	14,042
Miscellaneous Disposed Cases*	2,449
<i>*Primarily investigations closed without arrest</i>	

### Stakeholder Engagement Pursuant to Executive Order 2019-06

The Governor’s Executive Order tasked the Special Council with engaging a wide array of stakeholders in its efforts to understand issues related to gun violence and to identify recommendations. Specifically, the Executive Order required that the Council “[a]dopt 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 of Gun Violence Prevention.”<sup>34</sup>

The Special Council made efforts to engage as many perspectives as possible, including firearm owners, gun shop owners and employees, and gun rights advocates through its stakeholder engagement efforts. PCCD received public comments from more than 320 Pennsylvanians from 44 counties through an online public comment survey that was developed and launched in November 2019, the vast majority of which came from respondents who self-identified as white (81.1%), male (76.7%), and gun owners (61.4%). PCCD also engaged a consultant to conduct qualitative interviews with gun shop owners and employees as well as gun rights advocates to ensure that those perspectives were included in the Special Council’s deliberations.

Many of these stakeholder participants implored state leaders to increase enforcement of existing laws rather than institute new policies that create a burden for lawful gun owners. Several noted their constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms and questioned the legitimacy of any efforts to regulate or restrict firearm ownership or use. A significant portion of these respondents also called



on the Commonwealth to significantly increase investments in mental health services in communities across Pennsylvania. Still others questioned whether the term “gun violence” in and of itself was problematic, arguing that the focus should be on all forms of violence and that firearms are simply a mechanism for violent behavior, not the underlying source. Others, including firearm dealers, raised concerns regarding whether firearm safety training and safer storage practices should be expanded to ensure that people who purchase a gun know how to use it.

These concerns were reviewed by the Special Council. Wherever possible, the Special Council also recommended further deliberation rather than immediate action, particularly around policy proposals that generated concerns from gun owners or that would require significant statewide implementation. Finally, the report considers several strategies focused on areas raised by gun owners, such as primary prevention programs, firearm safety education and training, and mental and behavioral health. Ultimately, the Special Council believes the recommendations and action steps proposed in this report strike the right balance between protecting individual liberties cherished by many Pennsylvanians with the need to improve public safety and public health.

## GUN VIOLENCE: A PUBLIC HEALTH & PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERN



*“The reality is, mass shootings take place every day on the streets of our city, across the entire country... All life has value. You don’t have to lose it in large quantities before we start to pay attention to something that is as pressing an issue as gun violence... [W]e need to do everything we can to protect people.”*

- Charles H. Ramsey, PCCD Chairman & Special Advisor to the Governor,  
Remarks at Signing of Executive Order 2019-06

Shootings – whether intentional or unintentional – occur every day in communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In every case, these events represent a potential for injury; in the most tragic, they can result in death. The Governor’s Executive Order tasks the Special Council with examining relevant research, data, and statistics related to gun violence to make recommendations that are actionable.<sup>35</sup> This report tries to capture those efforts by highlighting the information and analyses considered by the Special Council in its work.

**Figure 5. Four Categories of Gun Violence in 2017, by Key Characteristics<sup>36</sup>**

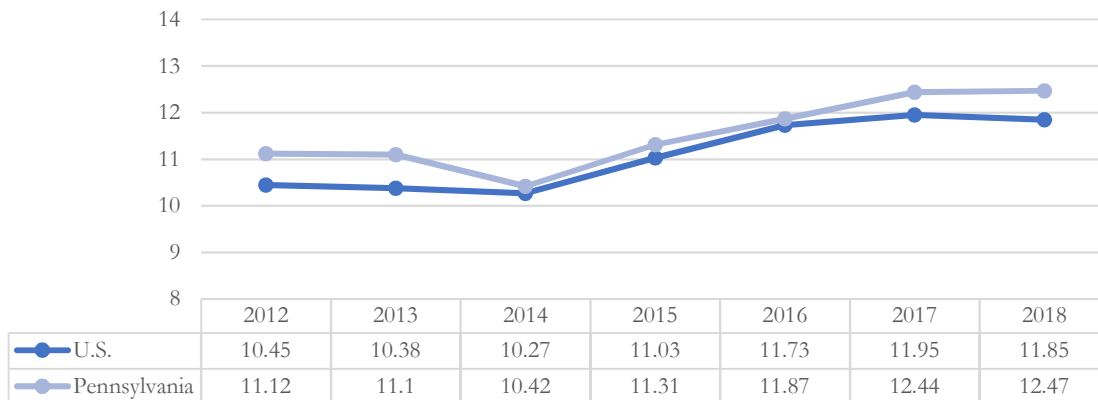
	<b>Suicide by Firearm</b>	<b>Criminal Homicide by Firearm</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Homicide by Firearm</b>	<b>Mass Shooting Fatalities</b>
Fatalities Per Year	23,854	14,542	Estimated 1,000-2,000	117
Most Common Victims	White males, 50+ years old	Black males, 18-34 years old	Females	Random
Type of Gun Commonly Used	Legal handguns	Illegally possessed handguns	Handguns that were originally purchased legally, but may be illegally owned due to criminal convictions	Mostly handguns, but a larger proportion of rifles than in other categories of shootings

### Firearm-Related Fatalities in Pennsylvania

Firearm-related injuries are among the leading causes of injury-related deaths for adults and the leading cause of injury-related death among children and teens in Pennsylvania.<sup>37</sup> In 2018, more than 1,650 Pennsylvanians died as the result of firearm-related injuries, including 119 children (ages 0 through 19).<sup>38</sup> These statistics are troubling, not just because of their scope, but because each number represents a human being. They are children, mothers, fathers, cousins, neighbors, friends, partners, siblings, and coworkers. The human costs of gun violence are immense and have been front and center in the Council’s efforts.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania’s rate of firearm-related injury exceeds the national average.<sup>39</sup> As shown in Figure 7, the Commonwealth’s firearm-related fatality rate also outpaces those of many of its neighboring states, with the exception of Ohio and West Virginia.

**Figure 6. Firearm-Related Fatality Rates, U.S. vs. Pennsylvania, 2012-2018<sup>40</sup>**



**Figure 7. Firearm-Related Fatality Rates in Pennsylvania and Neighboring States, 2018<sup>41</sup>**

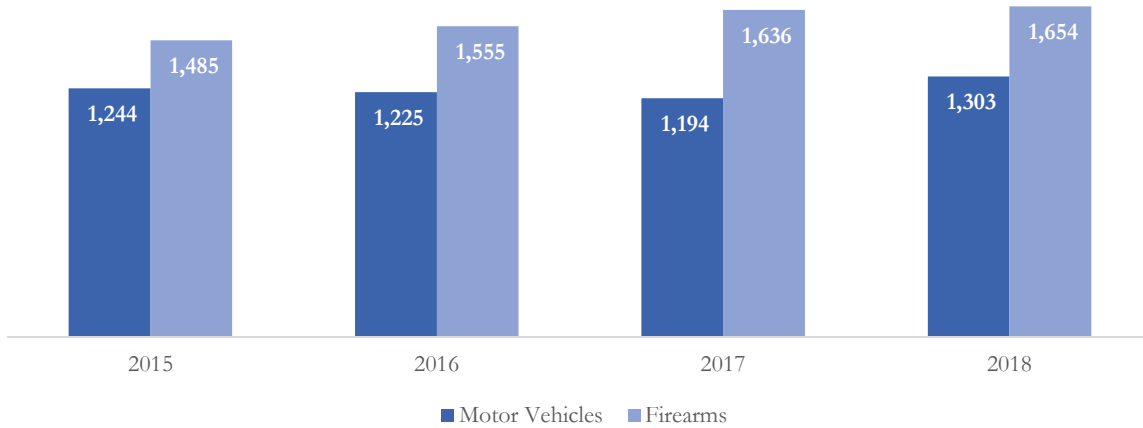
State	Population	Number of Firearm Deaths	Rate of Firearm Deaths
Delaware	967,171	107	11.55
Maryland	6,042,718	707	11.61
New Jersey	8,908,520	420	4.75
New York	19,542,209	821	4.03
Ohio	11,689,442	1,555	13.05
Pennsylvania	12,807,060	1,654	12.47
West Virginia	1,805,832	343	18.11

In 2018, more Pennsylvanians died by firearms than in motor vehicle accidents (1,654 compared with 1,303, respectively).<sup>42</sup> As shown in Figure 8, the number of fatalities resulting from motor vehicle accidents has largely declined year over year, whereas firearm-related fatalities has steadily increased (1,654 in 2018 compared to 1,485 in 2015).

As one trauma surgeon and public health expert noted during the Special Council’s public hearing in Pittsburgh:

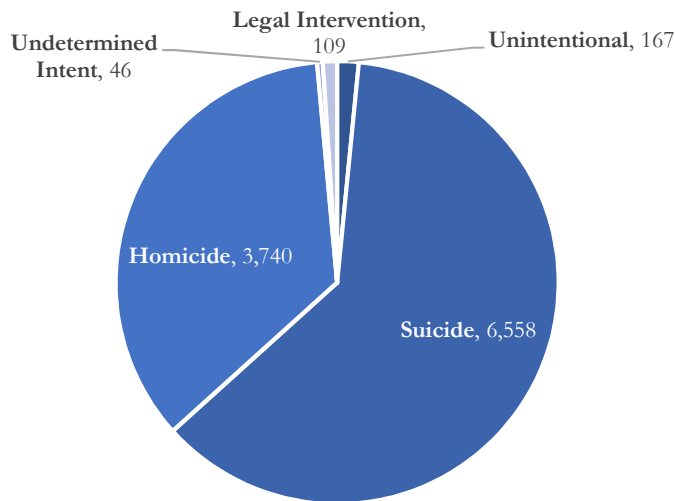
*“The health care community has a well-established history of working with the government to address public health concerns. When motor vehicle crash fatalities were rising, the nation moved toward safer roads, seatbelts, and improving vehicle safety. We enforce speed limits and seatbelt laws. We require children to be secured in approved child safety seats. We require testing and licensing prior to operating a vehicle... If the number of gun-related deaths remains the same next year, the number of American lives lost in two years by gun violence will surpass the number of American lives lost over 16 years in the Vietnam War. The numbers are staggering, and yet the government has been slow to partner with the health care community to combat this as a public health concern.”<sup>43</sup>*

**Figure 8. Pennsylvania Injury-Related Deaths, Motor Vehicles vs. Firearms (2015-2018)<sup>44</sup>**



Most people think of firearm homicides when they hear the phrase “gun violence,” but the reality is that nearly two-thirds (61.8%) of firearm-related deaths in Pennsylvania since 2012 were suicides, as shown in Figure 9.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 9. Firearm-Related Deaths in Pennsylvania by Manner of Death, 2012-2018<sup>46</sup>**



Research on suicides by firearm indicates that these acts are often impulsive, and that most people – 90% – who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide later.<sup>47</sup> However, suicide attempts with firearms are far more likely than other means of suicide to result in death.<sup>48</sup> Recognizing these facts, promising solutions for reducing suicides by firearm include putting time and distance between suicidal thoughts and actions and taking steps to prevent access to firearms for people who are depressed, under stress, and thinking of suicide.<sup>49</sup>

## Firearm-Related Crimes & Public Safety Concerns

Gun violence is also a significant public safety concern. Although overall crime rates have declined steadily in Pennsylvania and across the nation over the past three decades, the number of violent crimes committed with firearms remains significant, as shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Crimes Committed with Firearms in 2018<sup>50</sup>**

Type of Crime	Total	Firearms	Percent
Homicide	884	595	67.3%
Robbery	9,994	3,930	39.3%
Aggravated Assault	24,290	4,832	19.9%

Data from firearms tracing efforts and related research indicate that states with less restrictive gun laws, like Pennsylvania, are common sources for guns used in crimes in other states with more strict gun laws, like New Jersey and New York.<sup>51</sup> In 2018, more than 11,000 crime guns were recovered and traced in Pennsylvania, the majority of which were sourced from within the Commonwealth (6,452, or 58%).<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 11. Source of Crime Guns in Neighboring States, 2018<sup>53</sup>**

State	Number of Crime Guns Traced	In-State Crime Guns	Out-of-State Crime Guns	Crime Guns from Pennsylvania
Delaware	1,097	562 (51%)	535 (49%)	83 (8%)
Maryland	11,096	3,596 (32%)	7,500 (68%)	419 (4%)
New Jersey	4,034	530 (13%)	3,504 (87%)	407 (10%)
New York	7,689	1,170 (15%)	6,519 (85%)	337 (4%)
Ohio	12,928	8,508 (66%)	4,420 (34%)	104 (1%)
West Virginia	1,792	1,027 (57%)	765 (43%)	30 (2%)

## Economic Costs of Gun Violence

Immeasurable human costs should be the primary concern in any discussion about gun violence. But there are measurable costs to consider as well. A recent 50-state analysis estimated the annual economic costs of gun violence in Pennsylvania is a staggering \$8.5 billion, or \$665 per resident, when considering factors like lost income, employer costs, healthcare, and law enforcement and criminal justice involvement.<sup>54</sup>

This number, while large, is likely an underestimate given that it does not factor other negative economic impacts associated with gun violence, such as property values, commerce, and population growth. Additional research supported through the Urban Institute has found correlations between surges in gun violence with the health of local economies, including reductions in the growth rate of new retail and service businesses, slowing the appreciation of home values, and decreases in average credit scores, among other negative effects.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, a 2019 report published by Philadelphia’s Office of the City Controller on the economic impacts of homicide found that a single murder – typically involving firearms – can reduce property

values of neighborhood homes by 2.3%, and leads to secondary impacts such as population declines.<sup>56</sup> This interplay of violence, crime, poverty, and economic mobility is particularly acute for historically disadvantaged neighborhoods of Philadelphia, where gun violence and homicides are concentrated.<sup>57</sup>

At the direction of the Chairman, the Special Council and PCCD staff considered available cost-related research as it conducted its work, but encountered several challenges in developing more detailed, original data analyses. This included limited availability of county-specific and/or statewide datasets, as well as outdated information. In addition, data regarding direct and indirect costs associated with firearm-related nonfatal injuries was sparse – a widely acknowledged research gap.<sup>58</sup> As such, the Special Council has made recommendations broadly related to investing in research and data collection to better understand the scope and dynamics of gun violence within this report (see page 61).

## FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION STEPS

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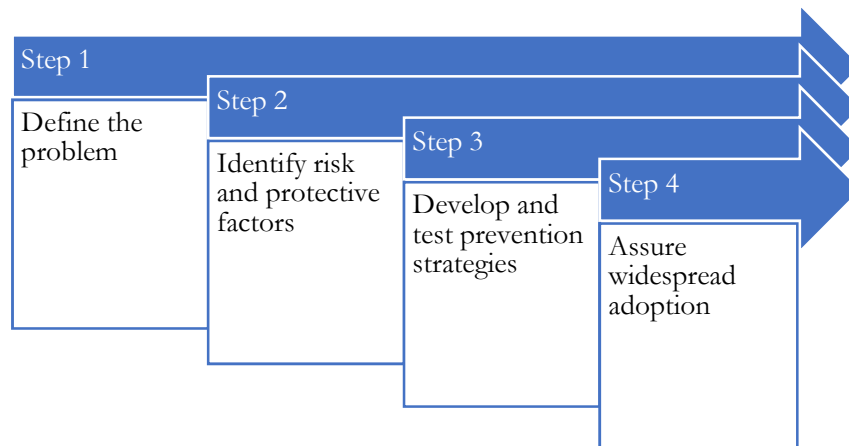
*“I am convinced that it is useless to stay stuck in the position that one side is right and the other side is wrong... I hope that we can learn with and from each other and that we can come to balance the need for self-protection in a world where violence will always exist alongside the right to strive for a satisfying, productive, and peaceful life.”*

*- Daniel Leger, RN, BCC, Retired Nurse, Chaplain, and Tree of Life Survivor, Testimony at Public Hearing on “Combatting Mass Shootings,” November 21, 2019*

Daniel Leger’s statement underscores nearly six months of research, conversation, debate, and deliberations by the Governor’s Special Council on Gun Violence. The statement illustrates the struggle that shaped this *Report of Findings and Recommendations*. Members and staff aimed to create space for thoughtful conversation and productive disagreement – places where people with a wide range of lived and learned expertise could come together to share their different opinions and identify common concerns. Ultimately, the work of the Special Council was driven by a desire to listen, learn, and develop a comprehensive and actionable plan that can improve health, safety, and security throughout the Commonwealth.

Recognizing that gun violence is not only a significant public safety concern but also one of public health, the Special Council was tasked with identifying prevention and intervention strategies using both lenses. The recommendations and action steps included in this report are aligned with the public health approach to violence prevention model, shown in Figure 12, below.

**Figure 12. The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention<sup>59</sup>**



The Special Council’s findings, recommendations, and action steps also connect to three foundational areas, or pillars: 1) Prevention, 2) Response, and 3) Recovery.



**Prevention:** In every conversation about gun violence, whether focused on the issue of domestic violence or unintentional shootings, Pennsylvanians have emphasized the critical role of prevention. Experts have pointed to the importance of evidence-based early-stage violence prevention approaches for youth, as well as training and education for adults to improve safety and reduce the likelihood of injury or death by firearms. Members of the Special Council and PCCD staff heard this message delivered from public health researchers, state troopers, educators, and advocates for gun rights and gun reforms alike. Several recommendations in this report aim to build on the important groundwork that has been laid through investments and initiatives focused on youth, families, and communities.



**Response:** Gun violence happens in every community across the state, and it requires attention, intervention, and response from multiple systems – public health, public safety, human services, education, and community leaders. Whether responding immediately to a shooting that has just occurred, or developing a long-term, systemic emergency preparedness response, many of the Special Council’s recommendations focus on strategies that can enhance a communities’ capacity to respond more effectively to gun violence.



**Recovery:** Many stakeholders shared stories about the journey of recovery that individuals, families, and communities must make when acts of gun violence occur. Progress on this path is often not straightforward, and it requires significant support, resources, time, and care to help those that are most directly affected by gun violence, such as survivors/victims, as well as those indirectly affected, such as friends, families, and first responders. Recovery looks different for everyone, but it can begin with ensuring spaces for individuals to share their story and ask for help if they need it.

The Special Council’s *Report of Findings and Recommendations* is organized around seven categories, ranging from prevention to response to systems enhancement strategies.

<b>Prevention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Prevention:</b> Stopping Gun Violence Before It Begins</li> <li>2. <b>Keeping Firearms Out of the Wrong Hands:</b> Preventing Situations Where Weapons Can Be Used to Harm Self or Others</li> </ol>
<b>Response &amp; Intervention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Mental Health:</b> Intersections of Trauma, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Gun Violence</li> <li>4. <b>Community Gun Violence:</b> Supporting Effective Community-led Efforts to Reduce Gun Violence</li> </ol>
<b>Systems Enhancement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Training and Education:</b> Enhancing Prevention, Intervention, and Response Skills</li> <li>6. <b>Coordinated Planning and Response:</b> Enhancing Preparation, Mitigation, Response and Recovery Efforts</li> <li>7. <b>Informing Better Policies and Practices:</b> Supporting Gun Violence Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation</li> </ol>

It is the hope of the Special Council that these recommendations and related findings will promote greater understanding of the dynamics of gun violence in the Commonwealth. It offers a blueprint



for action and further dialogue among leaders from healthcare, law enforcement, victim services, emergency management, justice systems, human services, education, economic and workforce development, among others. These recommendations lay out a course of action Pennsylvania can take to address gun violence in the Commonwealth. But these recommendations, of course, live within a broader political and budgetary context that can influence likelihood of success.

Much like the efforts to create it, implementing this report's recommendations will require significant levels of coordination from partners at all levels – community, county, state, and federal – to turn the ideas on these pages into action. Moving ahead, PCCD will continue to work with other state agencies to align resources, analyze available data, and monitor progress in local and statewide efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence. But it will take support from partners outside of the Governor's jurisdiction to make a real and sustained difference across the Commonwealth.



## I. PREVENTION: STOPPING GUN VIOLENCE BEFORE IT BEGINS

At every opportunity, stakeholders asked the Special Council on Gun Violence to prioritize practical, evidence-informed strategies that prevent violence. In that spirit, the first area of the Special Council's recommendations and action steps focus on primary prevention, increasing awareness and understanding the factors that contribute to gun violence, and promoting responsible firearm ownership.

### Primary Prevention & Youth Engagement Strategies

#### RECOMMENDATION #1

**Support and elevate effective, collaborative community-based practices to prevent gun violence in the Commonwealth.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Preventing gun violence begins with partnerships at the local level. A study published in 2017 exploring the effects of local nonprofits on violence crime found that for every 10 additional organizations focusing on crime and community life, there is a reduction in homicide (9%), violent crime (6 percent), and property crime rates (4%).<sup>60</sup> These efforts typically include partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, including grassroots organizations, faith-based organizations, healthcare practitioners, educators, community leaders, youth, activists, researchers, law enforcement, and human services agencies.

#### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

The Special Council affirms this vital role of neighborhood and community-based initiatives and believes that everyone has a role to play in preventing and ending gun violence – from faith-based organizations to law enforcement to health and human services agencies. The Commonwealth can, and should, do more to support these efforts and to elevate examples of effective local practices for state and local leaders. (Note: More information about the Special Council's findings and recommendations related to Community Gun Violence can be found on page 50.)

- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should develop a multi-year stakeholder engagement strategy that identifies and connects with key systems and individuals working to prevent gun violence in the Commonwealth.
- **Action Step:** PCCD should continue to promote and model collaborative practices at the state level by working with cross-agency partners to identify promising practices, common needs, and available resources.

## RECOMMENDATION #2

**Increase availability of 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.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Research suggests that many of the risk factors associated with interpersonal violence can be mitigated through evidence-informed primary prevention programs that promote protective factors for youth, adults, families, and communities.<sup>61</sup> Pennsylvania has long been considered a national leader for its investments in evidence-based prevention and intervention programming to reduce the number of youth entering the juvenile justice system and to enhance the well-being of youth, families, and communities. Recent analysis conducted by PCCD in collaboration with the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative and the Pennsylvania State University found that for every \$1 spent on evidence-based prevention programs through the PCCD's Violence and Delinquency Prevention Program (VDPP) initiative, there is an estimated \$4 in future savings.<sup>62</sup>

### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** The Pennsylvania Department of Education and State Board of Education should explore and adopt Social-Emotional Learning Standards for public Pre-K-12 schools.
- **Action Step:** To reduce rates of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, the Commonwealth should expand access to evidence-informed primary prevention programming that can improve the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
- **Action Step:** Increase funding for evidence-based prevention programs focused on youth, families and communities supported through PCCD's VDPP initiative in partnership with the Pennsylvania State University's EPISCenter.

## RECOMMENDATION #3

**Reduce risk factors associated with gun violence by removing barriers to education, training, and employment and creating opportunities for good-paying jobs.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Many stakeholders noted that multiple forms of gun violence, including suicide by firearms and community gun violence, are interwoven with risk factors stemming from a lack of socioeconomic opportunity. Promoting pathways for success through education, training, and employment, especially by removing barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals, is an important prerequisite for effectively preventing and reducing gun violence in Pennsylvania.

### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

This recommendation and related action steps focus on expanding promising efforts to promote career pathways for youth, investing in postsecondary education and training, and increasing opportunities for employment with family-sustaining wages. These include building on Pennsylvania's recent criminal justice reforms implemented through the Clean State Act.<sup>63</sup>

- **Action Step:** Municipalities and counties should identify gaps and promising strategies that address barriers to employment and expand opportunities for good-paying jobs, including efforts to implement “Ban the Box” and Clean Slate initiatives.
- **Action Step:** Promote career pathways and employment opportunities for at-risk and system-involved youth and adults, including access to postsecondary education and training, as well as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

## Promoting Safer Gun Ownership Practices



*“There were times when I had a customer purchasing a handgun where they did not have a clue how to handle the weapon. I showed them how to load it and unload it, but it scared me to let them walk out the door with that gun because they had no clue how to use it. It’s frightening.”*

- Central Pennsylvania Gun Shop Owner

Findings from a recently published study in the *American Journal of Public Health* found 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).<sup>64</sup> In addition, many gun owners lack training on basic firearm handling and use, contributing to accidental shootings and similarly preventable tragedies. A recent national study from the University of Washington School of Public Health found that only three in five U.S. gun owners have received any formal firearm training.<sup>65</sup>

The Special Council is offering two recommendations that recognize the need for increased firearm safety education, awareness, and training to reduce rates of firearm-related injuries and fatalities, especially among children and youth.

### RECOMMENDATION #4

**Increase the number of adults, especially those living in households with children, participating in evidence-informed firearm safety education, awareness, and training programs.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Firearm-related injuries are the third leading cause of death among children ages 0-17 in the U.S., and most unintentional shooting deaths among youth occur in the home.<sup>66</sup> While there is limited available research on the efficacy of firearm safety education programs, public safety and public health experts alike pointed to these efforts as a “common sense” approach to reducing the likelihood of injury among firearm owners and their loved ones.

#### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should support programs provided in partnership with local law enforcement, gun shops and ranges, and community groups that promote safer firearm handling and storage practices, including development

and dissemination of culturally competent and trauma-informed resources and materials that reflect diverse audiences and settings.

- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should explore minimum standards, 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 key issues.
- **Action Step:** Encourage the development of an online repository of available resources related to safer storage and handling of firearms, such as certified/accredited firearm safety training instructors, safety education programs, and other information.
- **Action Step:** Work with public health and public safety researchers to evaluate outcomes of existing firearm safety programs and identify strategies to help facilitate developmentally appropriate conversations about firearm safety with youth.

## RECOMMENDATION #5

**Analyze implementation and outcomes of state laws that enhance licensing and other requirements for firearm ownership and concealed carry permits (e.g., minimum age, training or demonstration of skills).**

### WHAT WE KNOW

While neither federal nor Pennsylvania law require individuals to obtain a license or permit to purchase a firearm, several states have enacted permit-to-purchase and/or other requirements in an effort to restrict access to firearms for individuals with greater risk of misusing them.<sup>67</sup> Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research suggest that, coupled with other reforms, licensing efforts by states and municipalities can reduce firearm homicide and suicide rates.<sup>68</sup> In general, these laws fall into four categories: 1) permit to purchase; 2) license to own; 3) firearm safety certificate; and 4) registration.<sup>69</sup> (For additional information, please see Appendix F, which includes a summary of current state licensing requirements for gun purchase and/or possession.)

Testimony provided during the “Reducing Likelihood of Accidental Shootings” public hearing on November 15, 2019, emphasized the impact of training and education on declining rates of unintentional injuries and fatalities involving firearms nationally.<sup>70</sup> Since its inception in 1959, the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s hunter education training program has contributed to a nearly 80% decline in the number of hunting-related shooting incidents.<sup>71</sup>

### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

The Special Council believes additional research into the direct effects of various purchasing, licensing, and permitting schemas could help address a significant gap in the literature and would be an essential prerequisite before Pennsylvania could consider any policy recommendations in this area.

- **Action Step:** The Joint State Government Commission or a similar body should review and analyze current firearm purchasing, licensing, and permitting requirements enacted in other states, including exceptions, to determine impacts of implementing enhanced minimum firearm purchasing or concealed carry application requirements.

## Increasing Public Awareness & Understanding of Gun Violence

### RECOMMENDATION #6

**Promote awareness of gun violence and action steps individuals and communities can take to improve public health and safety through a comprehensive statewide communications strategy.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

In exploring promising practices and strategies as part of its responsibilities under the Governor's Executive Order, the Special Council frequently heard concerns from stakeholders about the prevalence of myths and misconceptions when it comes to gun violence. Many called for the Commonwealth to do more to promote public awareness and understanding of the risk factors and specific actions Pennsylvanians can take to improve their own safety, the safety of their loved ones, and the safety of their communities.

#### RECOMMENDED APPROACH

To increase awareness of gun violence and increase the adoption of behaviors that promote safety – like safer storage practices or understanding how to get help when someone is going through a crisis – the Special Council recommends the development and launch of a comprehensive public messaging and information campaign, tailored to specific audiences. This information should be designed in such a way that it can be easily shared and spread using social media and other forms of digital mass communication.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should develop and launch a comprehensive public messaging and information campaign that helps Pennsylvanians recognize risks, adopt practices for safer storage and handling of firearms, and take other steps to prevent and reduce gun violence.
- **Action Step:** Work with stakeholders from target audiences to create communication tools that can be easily disseminated through social media and other mass media platforms.

## Preventing Suicide by Firearms

Suicide is the leading cause of firearm-related deaths in Pennsylvania (1,025 out of 1,654 fatalities in 2018). Of the Commonwealth's more than 2,000 suicide deaths in 2018, half (50.9%) were firearm-related.<sup>72</sup> The firearm suicide rate in Pennsylvania has increased by 24% in the past decade<sup>73</sup> – more than the national average increase (19%).<sup>74</sup> National firearm suicide rates of children and teens over the same time period have increased by a staggering 82%.<sup>75</sup>

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% of suicide deaths involving firearms.<sup>76</sup>

In an effort to combat the public health crisis of suicide, Governor Wolf established a statewide Pennsylvania Suicide Prevention Task Force in May 2019.<sup>77</sup> The Task Force hosted public listening sessions throughout the fall, and recently released an initial report calling for comprehensive statewide efforts to reduce stigma, incentivize the integration of physical and behavioral health, address barriers to treatment, bolster the state's mental health workforce, improve availability of

data, and consider legislation that would limit access to firearms for people at risk for suicide.<sup>78</sup> Many of those themes also emerged as part of the Special Council on Gun Violence’s stakeholder engagement efforts, including initial recommendations considered from the Preventing Suicide by Firearms Workgroup.<sup>79</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION #7

### **Invest in evidence-informed suicide prevention programs, mental health, and counseling services, as well as training and technical assistance.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

As with other forms of gun violence, investing in early evidence-informed prevention strategies was identified by the Special Council as an essential strategy in reducing fatalities and injuries related to suicide by firearms. This recommendation and related action steps build on the important progress Pennsylvania has already made in addressing suicide risk among key populations, especially youth, such as schools’ implementation of suicide awareness and prevention requirements under Act 71 of 2014.<sup>80</sup>

More progress is needed, however, to address growing concerns around youth suicide risk. The 2017 *Pennsylvania Youth Survey* found that one in five 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the Commonwealth reported considering suicide in the past year, and nearly 12% had attempted suicide.<sup>81</sup> In addition, of the more than 40,000 anonymous tips received by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General in the first year of its *Safe2Say Something* program, the majority dealt with mental health concerns like, bullying/cyberbullying, cutting/self-harm, suicide/suicide ideation, and depression/anxiety.<sup>82</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

During its public hearing on “Preventing Suicide by Firearms,” the Special Council heard from experts who emphasized the need to also do more to prevent suicide among adults, especially in rural communities, which have higher rates of suicide than urban areas.<sup>83</sup> They pointed to a need for increased training and awareness for firearm purchasers and owners. One recent study suggests that while a little more than half of surveyed U.S. gun owners received some type of training on firearms, only 15% reported receiving information about suicide prevention.<sup>84</sup>

Stakeholders and experts urged the Special Council to consider the nationally recognized “Gun Shop Project” as a model for increasing the number of gun owners that receive this information in Pennsylvania. The Harvard University-led initiative provides a framework for integrating suicide prevention as a basic tenet of firearm safety and responsible gun ownership through partnerships with firearm dealers and gun owner groups. Guided by the work of the New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition, suicide prevention partnerships with gun owner groups have been implemented in 23 states across the country, including an early-stage pilot here in Pennsylvania, as a promising practice to increase awareness of gun suicides and save lives.<sup>85</sup>

- **Action Step:** Allocate more resources for evidence-informed suicide prevention programs as well as mental health and counseling services, especially for youth and veterans.
- **Action Step:** Develop mechanisms to promote the selection of high-quality suicide prevention trainers and training organizations by schools and other organizations.

- **Action Step:** Use the nationally recognized “Gun Shop Project” model<sup>86</sup> 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.

## Preventing Domestic Violence-Related Shootings

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and coercive behavior – physical, sexual, reproductive, emotional, economic, and/or psychological – in a relationship used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.<sup>87</sup> In the last decade, more than 1,600 Pennsylvanians were killed as a result of domestic violence, including 123 individuals in 2018.<sup>88</sup>

Studies have shown significant correlations between abusers’ access to guns and the risk of homicide. Women who are physically abused by their partners are five times as likely to be killed when their partner owns a firearm, and those who are threatened or assaulted with a gun are 20 times more likely to be murdered.<sup>89</sup> In every year since 2009, at least 49% of domestic violence homicide victims in Pennsylvania were killed with a firearm, and offenders in 90% of intimate partner murder-suicides used firearms.<sup>90</sup>

### RECOMMENDATION #8

**Support voluntary statewide adoption of the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) model by counties and the Pennsylvania State Police.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

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.<sup>91</sup> Data collected since initial implementation of LAP in October 2012 suggests the following outcomes:<sup>92</sup>

- During 2012 to 2019, more than 24,000 screens were completed by law enforcement.
- 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%) 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%) went to a program to receive further services.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

Recognizing its lifesaving potential, the Special Council believes more communities in Pennsylvania – including those relying on the Pennsylvania State Police for primary coverage<sup>93</sup> – should adopt the LAP model. The Commonwealth should provide resources to PCCD and other entities to support costs associated with this expansion and ensure that the costs of a cell phone or a monthly bill does not preclude law enforcement agencies from taking up this promising model.



- **Action Step:** Provide funding to support voluntary adoption of the LAP model by state and local law enforcement agencies, including grants for PCADV LAP training as well as the purchase of cell phones and related expenditures.
- **Action Step:** PCCD, in collaboration with PCADV and other stakeholders, should explore the mobile LAP app and protocols developed in Pittsburgh to determine whether additional funding could support development and deployment of a similar tool statewide.

## RECOMMENDATION #9

### Recognizing the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, the Commonwealth should bolster comprehensive supports and protections for victims/survivors.

#### WHAT WE KNOW

It is important that victims/survivors of intimate partner violence and domestic violence have access to a wide range of supports and services focused on their safety and well-being. This is especially true when considering the immediate and long-term needs of individuals who are at risk because of an abusive partner or family member's access to weapons, including firearms, as well as victims/survivors of domestic violence-related shootings. In many cases, legal steps are necessary to provide for protective measures, such as Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders and the protocols for immediate relinquishment of firearms established through Act 79 of 2018.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Commonwealth should continue to support state and county domestic violence programs to coordinate access to comprehensive services and supports for victims/survivors and their loved ones. This includes increasing availability of and access to PFA attorneys and free legal services so that more victims/survivors, including those living in households with firearms, can secure a lifesaving PFA. Finally, PCCD's Victim Services Advisory Committee should develop a framework to explore implementation and support of innovative models that have been used in other states, such as Domestic Violence Advocates embedded in local law enforcement agencies, and identify which promising practices should be prioritized for consideration by the Commonwealth.

- **Action Step:** Increase the number and availability of PFA attorneys and free legal services in communities across Pennsylvania.
- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Create a framework to identify, test, and replicate evidence-informed domestic violence and intimate partner violence programming innovations being implemented in other states.

## RECOMMENDATION #10

### Analyze potential benefits and consequences of establishing a criminal definition of "domestic violence" in Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of Pennsylvania's Consolidated Statutes.

## WHAT WE KNOW

Domestic violence is not currently defined within Pennsylvania’s crimes code (Title 18) and is not considered a separate charge from a crime like battery, aggravated assault, or assault.<sup>94</sup> Instead, any criminal offense can be considered a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence if it meets certain criteria (e.g., was committed by a current or former spouse, parent/guardian, or a person with whom the victim shares a child in common).<sup>95</sup> Pennsylvania’s legal definition of “domestic abuse” is found in Section 6102 of Title 23 (Domestic Relations).<sup>96</sup> Sentencing guidelines for misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence are provided for use by judges through regulations promulgated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing.<sup>97</sup>

## PROPOSED APPROACH

Approximately 38 states have criminal definitions of domestic violence and related penalties within their criminal codes, with significant variation in terms of how the offense is defined and what relationships are captured.<sup>98</sup> The Special Council believes that further exploration of these states’ criminal definitions as well as the potential benefits and consequences of using such a framework by PCCD in collaboration with key stakeholders is warranted. This evaluation should be conducted in partnership with key stakeholders, including domestic violence programs, district attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement, and courts, among others.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should work with PCADV and other key stakeholders to examine use of criminal definitions of “domestic violence” in other states, including whether the laws have benefits, such as promoting more consistent sentencing of incidents, or unintended consequences, such as dual arrests.

## **Combatting Mass Shootings**

While the term “mass shootings” varies in its scope, the FBI’s definition is commonly cited and includes multiple homicide incidents in which four or more victims are murdered, within one event, and in one or more locations in close geographic proximity.<sup>99</sup> According to the *U.S. Mass Shootings Database* developed by the media organization *Mother Jones*, there have been at least 117 recorded mass shootings in the U.S. since 1982, including 10 in 2019.<sup>100</sup> Research suggests that, while still statistically rare events, the number and frequency of mass shootings has increased significantly in recent years.<sup>101</sup>

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%).<sup>102</sup> Additional analysis of the 143 guns possessed by mass shooters indicates that more than three-quarters were legally obtained.<sup>103</sup> The majority of shooters possessed high-capacity magazines and/or modern sporting rifles; 71 firearms used in mass shootings were semiautomatic handguns.<sup>104</sup> Incidents occurred in a variety of settings, including places of business, open spaces, schools, transportation, and houses of worship.<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION #11

**To prevent contagion and reduce notoriety, adopt an official statewide position that mass shooters' names will not be released unless public safety or other relevant requirements demand it (i.e., shooter is still at large).**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Studies of perpetrators of mass violence have found that a desire for infamy can be a motivating factor for mass shooters,<sup>107</sup> and that releasing information and details about perpetrators of mass violence can lead to “copycat” violence or a “contagion” effect.<sup>108</sup> With that in mind, more communities and media outlets are moving to adopt a “no notoriety” approach, which minimizes focus on suspects and perpetrators of mass violence.<sup>109</sup>

### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Special Council believes that Pennsylvania should adopt a similar approach, and recommends the Administration adopt an official statewide position that mass shooters' names will not be released unless public safety or another relevant requirement demands doing so. The Commonwealth should also collaborate with media organizations and professionals to promote safer reporting practices.

- **Action Step:** The 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.
- **Action Step:** The Administration should also collaborate with local law enforcement agencies as well as media organizations and professionals to provide outreach, training, and education to inform safer reporting practices.



## II. KEEPING FIREARMS OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS: PREVENTING SITUATIONS WHERE GUNS CAN BE USED TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS

Underlying much of the Special Council’s research and recommendations was a desire to reduce access to firearms from individuals that pose a risk of hurting themselves or others. The issue was raised in different forms depending on which type of gun violence was discussed.

For preventing suicide by firearms, experts pointed to the importance of reducing access to lethal means to decrease risk, while stakeholders in the Domestic Violence-Related Shootings Workgroup raised the importance of new reforms in state law (Act 79 of 2018) that require faster relinquishment of firearms from domestic abusers. In the conversations focused on community gun violence, the concern over gun theft, trafficking and use of illegal guns surfaced frequently, as did the issue of emerging online firearm markets. To prevent accidental shootings, especially by children, experts called for safer storage practices and exploration of safer firearm technology. Recognizing issues like “leakage” and intersections with suicidality, stakeholders from Workgroups called for consideration of measures that allow for the temporary removal of firearms when there are concerns an individual poses a danger to themselves or others.

As such, the second area of the Special Council’s recommendations and action steps focus on keeping firearms out of the wrong hands, including background checks, preventing unauthorized access to lawfully owned firearms, and reducing access to guns for dangerous individuals and people in crisis.

### Background Checks

The Governor’s Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence explicitly tasks the Special Council on Gun Violence with exploring best practices and making recommendations related to the process of 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.<sup>110</sup> (For more information about regulation of firearms in Pennsylvania, including federal and state background check processes, please see page 15.)

As of last year, 21 states, including Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia have extended background check requirements beyond the minimum criteria established through the federal Brady Act. (For more information about these states, please see Appendix H.) Data suggests that when background checks are required and enforced, they can help keep weapons out of the hands of dangerous individuals; since 1994, more than 3 million individuals legally prohibited from possessing a firearm were denied through background checks.<sup>111</sup>

A recent review of available research and literature related to states’ implementation of background check requirements conducted by the RAND Corporation found limited evidence that background checks may reduce total suicides and moderate evidence that background checks reduce rates of

suicide by firearms.<sup>112</sup> The report also found some evidence that background checks reduce violent crimes and total homicide rates as well as moderate evidence that dealer background checks reduce firearm homicides.

## RECOMMENDATION #12

**Explore amendments to modernize the Uniform Firearms Act and close loopholes that put law-abiding Pennsylvanians at risk for purchasing or selling firearms from or to bad actors.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Under Pennsylvania state law, all sales of handguns, whether private or directly from a licensed dealer, must include a background check. Under state law, private sellers (i.e., those who are not licensed) may only sell a handgun through a licensed importer, manufacturer, dealer or county sheriff's office, who must initiate a background check through PICS.<sup>113</sup> Background checks are required for sales and transfers of long guns through licensed firearm dealers in Pennsylvania, but are generally not required for private sales or transfers of long guns.<sup>114</sup>

Online sales of firearms conducted through licensed sellers are subject to the same background check requirements as in-person sales. Online forums that facilitate private sales of firearms largely place responsibility on individual unlicensed buyers and sellers to comply with relevant local, state, and federal laws.<sup>115</sup> This can make it difficult for responsible gun owners to determine whether the individual they are interested in purchasing from, or selling to, is just as responsible. A recent analysis of gun buyers on Armslist.com (a major online classifieds platform for firearms) found that nearly one in nine would not have passed a background check.<sup>116</sup>

As described previously, there is evidence supporting background checks. They are effective in preventing and reducing multiple forms of gun violence. Studies have found that states without universal background check laws export crime guns across state lines at a 30% higher rate than states with those requirements in place, suggesting that background checks may also help prevent guns from being diverted to the illegal gun market.<sup>117</sup>

### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Pennsylvania's Uniform Firearms Act's current language does not contemplate online sales in any fashion; in fact, the only use of the word "Internet" is in reference to the posting of information regarding interstate reciprocity agreements by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. Recognizing the increase in online private sales and transfers in Pennsylvania, the Special Council recommends exploring potential strategies to modernize the law and increase confidence in the safety and legality of online gun sales and purchases.

- **Action Item:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should convene key stakeholders, including licensed firearm dealers, gun owners, and law enforcement to identify potential strategies to increase confidence in safety and legality of online gun sales and purchases.
- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should also explore potential amendments to Pennsylvania's Uniform Firearms Act that would require the completion of a background checks for private sales and transfers of long guns to unlicensed buyers.

### RECOMMENDATION #13

**Close the “boyfriend loophole” by extending existing firearm restrictions to include current and former dating partners convicted of certain offenses.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Half of all women fatally shot in the U.S. were killed by intimate partners, and more than half of mass shootings involved the shooter killing an intimate partner.<sup>118</sup> Research suggests that firearms also factor significantly in nonfatal abuse and violence; an estimated 4.5 million women have been threatened with a gun and nearly 1 million have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner.<sup>119</sup>

Background checks have proven effective in preventing domestic abusers from accessing firearms; more than 300,000 abusers have been barred from buying guns through NICS since its inception, and approximately one in nine background check denials are domestic violence-related.<sup>120</sup> However, while federal law does prohibit individuals convicted of domestic violence-related crimes from purchasing or possessing firearms, these prohibitions only apply in cases where the abuser cohabitates as a spouse or has a child in common with the victim.<sup>121</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

This recommendation aims to close a major gap, known as the “boyfriend loophole,” in federal and state law that allows violent and abusive dating partners to purchase a gun. Including current and former dating partners as prohibited purchasers or possessors would reduce access to firearms – an important step for improving victim/survivor safety.

While advocating for reforms at the federal level through the pending VAWA Reauthorization, the Commonwealth should also examine available data and current policies here in Pennsylvania. It is necessary to establish a baseline regarding levels of firearm-related incidents by dating/intimate partners and share that aggregate analyses with relevant stakeholders. PCCD’s Victim Services Advisory Committee, in partnership with the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, should develop recommendations seeking legislation that would strengthen existing prohibitions on the purchase and possession of firearms by abusive dating partners.

- **Action Step:** The Governor and Administration should continue to communicate support for reauthorization of the federal Violence Against Women Act and proposed provisions that would prohibit purchase of firearms by current and former dating partners convicted of abuse or stalking to Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegation.
- **Action Step:** In addition to advocating for reforms at the federal level, the Victim Services Advisory Committee within PCCD should develop recommendations regarding state legislation that would strengthen Pennsylvania’s existing prohibitions on purchase and possession of firearms for abusive dating partners, such as expanding prohibition to include dating partners convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors.

### RECOMMENDATION #14

**Amend Pennsylvania’s Mental Health Procedures Act to close loopholes in current background check processes and require immediate electronic reporting of involuntary mental health commitments to law enforcement.**

## WHAT WE KNOW

As currently written in the Mental Health Procedures Act, there is not a clear timeframe for reporting of involuntary commitments from facilities to counties, and County Medical Review Officers have up to seven days to notify the Pennsylvania State Police of a commitment for inclusion in the Mental Health Database and NICS index.<sup>122</sup> As subject matter experts from the State Police noted during the public hearing on “Preventing Suicide by Firearms,” this notification is “vital to preventing someone who has been involuntarily committed from obtaining a firearm.”<sup>123</sup>

## PROPOSED APPROACH

- **Action Item:** State agencies, including the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania State Police, should work in consultation with key stakeholders to develop recommendations for legislative amendments providing for immediate (upon commitment) electronic reporting to law enforcement.
- **Action Item:** If legislative changes are made, the Commonwealth should support local implementation by providing training for relevant professionals and organizations, as well as promoting public awareness through education campaigns and stakeholder engagement.

## Preventing Unauthorized Access to Lawfully Owned Firearms

### RECOMMENDATION #15

**Increase adoption of safer firearm storage and design practices by reducing cost, improving awareness, and leveraging advances in technology.**

## WHAT WE KNOW

The safest way to store firearms is locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.<sup>124</sup> However, a recent national survey of gun owners found that more than half store at least one firearm unsafely, with a quarter of all gun owners reporting storing all their firearms in an unlocked location.<sup>125</sup>

Household guns are a major source of weapons used in connection with crimes as well as weapons used in interpersonal violence and suicide.<sup>126</sup> Gun owners who store firearms safely were less likely than individuals who stored firearms unlocked and/or loaded to die by firearm suicide.<sup>127</sup> Unsecured weapons can pose a significant risk to children; estimates suggest that modest increases in safer storage practices by gun owners could prevent almost a third of firearm-related fatalities among youth associated with suicide and unintentional injury.<sup>128</sup> Unsafely stored weapons can also contribute to firearm theft, an increasing concern, especially in urban areas.<sup>129</sup>

Safely storing firearms can be expensive. The cost of gun safes ranges from \$75-\$100 for a single handgun to more than \$1,500 for safes that can hold multiple rifles.<sup>130</sup> And while federal law requires that licensed firearm importers, manufacturers, and dealers provide purchasers and transferees with a secure gun storage or safety device, this requirement only applies to handguns.<sup>131</sup>

In addition, advances in technology, including the concept of “smart guns” developed more than two decades ago, promise to improve safety of firearms by ensuring that only a gun’s owner can pull the trigger. A review of sample cases by researchers suggests that 37% of unintentional and undetermined firearm deaths could be prevented using smart gun technology.<sup>132</sup> But despite this promise and broad support among gun owners,<sup>133</sup> these advancements in user-authorization technology remain inaccessible due to limited commercial availability.<sup>134</sup>

### PROPOSED APPROACH

By increasing awareness of safer storage practices, offsetting costs to more safely store firearms, and supporting the integration of technology to improve safety of firearms themselves, the Commonwealth can reduce the number of households with unsafely stored weapons, reducing the likelihood of injury and death as well as prevent guns from being stolen and potentially entering the criminal market. But safer storage methods are just one tool. Recognizing the significant public safety and public health benefits that safety innovations could play, the Commonwealth should also explore and promote smart gun technology as an option for Pennsylvania’s firearm owners.

- **Action Step:** Address the biggest barriers to safe firearm storage, such as cost, ease of use, training and education, etc., by supporting gunlock giveaways, offsetting costs of gun storage devices (through funding or tax credits) and promoting firearm safety training.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should research and recommend alternatives to reduce the cost of safe gun storage and should provide information on effective gun storage strategies for different types of firearms.
- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should support expanded access to smart gun technology as a safer option for firearm owners.

### RECOMMENDATION #16

**The Commonwealth should explore enacting legislation requiring the safer handling and storage of firearms, including Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

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.<sup>135</sup>

In an effort to restrict access to firearms among children and youth, 27 states and the District of Columbia have enacted child-access prevention (CAP) laws, which allow for criminal prosecution of adults who intentionally or carelessly allow unsupervised access to firearms.<sup>136</sup> In addition, 11 states currently have requirements related to firearm locking devices and/or safe storage of firearms.<sup>137</sup> These policies have promising effect: studies suggest that CAP laws can reduce suicide and unintentional firearm injuries/deaths among children and teens by up to 54%, with the most significant reductions in states that also require the safe storage of firearms.<sup>138</sup> In addition, states with safe storage requirements for handguns experience reduced rates of firearm suicide.<sup>139</sup>

A recent review of available research and literature related to CAP laws conducted by the RAND Corporation had similar findings. The RAND researchers 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.<sup>140</sup>

**PROPOSED APPROACH**

Because there are significant policy considerations inherent to safer storage laws, the Special Council recommends completing a thorough review of enacted laws in other states and meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders to ensure that any approach considered in Pennsylvania carefully addresses potential requirements, enforcement provisions (range of sanctions), as well as potential exceptions.<sup>3</sup>

- **Action Step:** The Joint State Government Commission or similar body should provide a review of enacted laws in other states focused on safe handling and or storage of firearms, including CAP laws, and present analysis on implementation steps, outcomes, costs, and other relevant information to the General Assembly.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should convene a workgroup to review the Joint State Government Commission’s findings and recommend specific safe firearm storage practices for action by the General Assembly with input from all key stakeholder groups, including addressing potential enforcement provisions (range of sanctions) as well as potential exceptions.

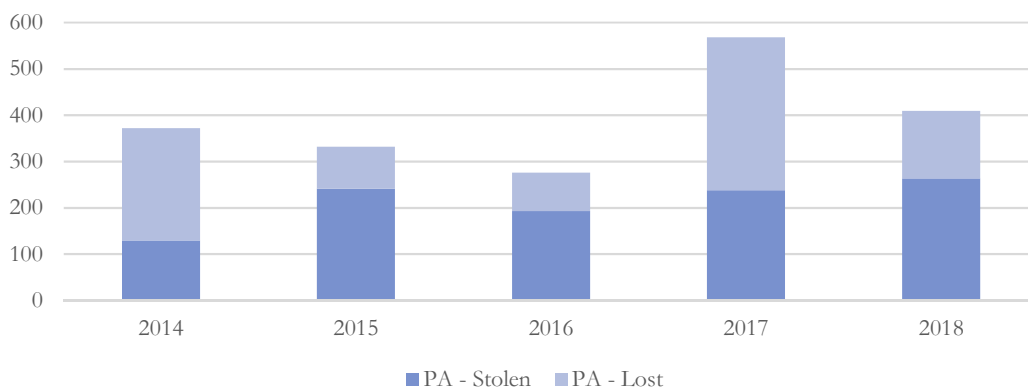
**RECOMMENDATION #17**

**Require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms to law enforcement.**

**WHAT WE KNOW**

Although 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.<sup>141</sup> 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.<sup>142</sup>

**Figure 13. Firearms Reported Lost or Stolen from Pennsylvania FFLs, 2014-2018**



<sup>3</sup> Please see Appendix I for a summary of enacted safe storage and CAP laws.

An estimated 43,768 firearms were stolen in the Commonwealth from 2012 through 2017 from both individual firearm owners as well as dealers.<sup>143</sup> 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.<sup>144</sup>

While federal law requires licensed firearm dealers report lost or stolen guns to law enforcement, no such requirements currently exist at the federal level or in Pennsylvania state law for individual firearm owners.<sup>145</sup> In an effort to increase safer 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.<sup>146,147</sup> (For more information on state laws related to lost/stolen firearm reporting, please see Appendix G.)

Some research suggests that, coupled with stricter firearm storage laws, states with lost/stolen reporting requirements in place – such as Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, and New York – have firearm theft rates significantly below the national average.<sup>148</sup> One study from researchers at Johns Hopkins University found that crime guns originating in states with lost/stolen reporting requirements were 30% less likely to show up in another state than guns coming from states without those requirements.<sup>149</sup>

## PROPOSED APPROACH

- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should work with key stakeholder groups, including state and local law enforcement, gun owners and dealers, to develop legislation requiring reporting of lost or stolen firearms that includes amnesty/immunity provisions for individuals who comply with the law.

## **Reducing Access to Firearms for Dangerous Individuals and People in Crisis**

### **RECOMMENDATION #18**

**Increase options for Pennsylvanians to reduce access to firearms for themselves or a loved one when they are concerned about safety.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Pennsylvania's Uniform Firearms Act includes 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.<sup>150</sup> Though the law provides for strict, lifetime prohibitions for Pennsylvanians with a mental health history (i.e., those who have been involuntarily committed), an individual without such a history experiencing a sudden or imminent crisis will likely retain the ability to purchase or possess firearms, even when others are aware of the person's potential to harm themselves or others.<sup>151</sup>

Several states have attempted to address this issue by establishing a civil judicial process that allows family 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.<sup>152</sup> 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.<sup>153</sup>

### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Special Council believes it is appropriate to explore whether these policies and procedures in other states have achieved their intended outcomes to determine if creating a new process through legislation could help prevent gun suicides, mass shootings, and other tragedies in Pennsylvania.

The Special Council also believes there is merit in supporting voluntary options for relinquishment of firearms through programs like Hold My Guns. Hold My Guns is a Pennsylvania-based non-profit organization that provides safe off-site surrender and storage options for firearm owners through partnerships with gun shops.<sup>154</sup> These efforts can provide a lifesaving avenue for firearm owners who want to take a break from firearms when they (or someone in their household) experience a crisis, struggle with mental health issues, or deal with substance abuse.<sup>155</sup>

Both strategies hold the potential to address a major risk factor to suicide and risk for suicide (access to firearms) by providing a safe, alternative place to store guns for the estimated 43% of individuals who live in gun households.<sup>156</sup>

- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Develop and expand temporary and voluntary and safe off-site surrender and/or storage of firearms.

### **RECOMMENDATION #19**

**Examine impact and implementation of Act 79 of 2018, which established new requirements and procedures for firearm relinquishment in cases of Protection From Abuse orders and conviction of the misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Pennsylvania has made important progress in addressing domestic violence through practice and policy, including landmark bipartisan legislation. Act 79 of 2018 went into effect on April 10, 2019, and requires the relinquishment of weapons, including firearms, in both PFA orders and convictions of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence within 24 hours.<sup>157</sup>

Act 79 was a significant moment for increasing protections for domestic violence victims/survivors in Pennsylvania. It also marked a dramatic shift in practices to relinquish firearms for state and local law enforcement tasked with implementing the new law. The recent policy change provides an important opportunity to gauge outcomes, address challenges, and enhance county-level implementation of Act 79 through technical assistance, data collection, and other efforts.

### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Special Council on Gun Violence recommends that PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention prioritize efforts to research and examine statewide implementation of Act 79, and to monitor outcomes moving forward.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should support the development and dissemination of Act 79 implementation plans which identify best practices for county-specific protocols and procedures, gaps, community resources, and coordination mechanisms.
- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should analyze available data at the state level and should support the development of local data collection processes to monitor implementation progress and outcomes while being mindful of confidentiality and privacy requirements.



### III. MENTAL HEALTH: INTERSECTIONS OF TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE & GUN VIOLENCE

Mental health issues are often cited as a contributing factor in the aftermath of incidents like mass shootings. But persons with mental illness represent a very small portion of gun violence;<sup>158</sup> in fact, people with mental illness are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators, especially suicide by firearms.<sup>159, 160</sup> When acts of violence by people with mental illness occur, they usually result from lack of access to necessary mental health services and treatment.<sup>161</sup>

These misconceptions can obscure the more complex intersections of trauma (personal, historical, community, etc.), mental health, substance abuse, and gun violence. Trauma experienced in childhood (also known as adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs) comes in many forms, as shown in Figure 14. Studies suggest that a prevalence of conventional and/or expanded ACEs can have lasting negative effects that carry into adulthood, including poor health outcomes. Researchers examining system-involved youth found high rates of conventional ACEs, such as physical abuse, growing up in a household with someone struggling with substance abuse, or emotional abuse, as well as expanded ACEs, such as witnessing community violence and racial discrimination.<sup>162</sup>

**Figure 14. Types of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)<sup>163</sup>**

Conventional ACEs	Expanded ACEs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical abuse</li><li>• Emotional abuse</li><li>• Physical neglect</li><li>• Emotional neglect</li><li>• Sexual abuse</li><li>• Violence toward mother</li><li>• Substance abuse in household</li><li>• Household mental illness</li><li>• Household member incarcerated</li><li>• Parental separation or divorce</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discrimination</li><li>• Witnessed violence</li><li>• Unsafe neighborhood</li><li>• Racism</li><li>• Poverty</li></ul>

There is also a well-documented connection between exposure to trauma, particularly trauma experienced in childhood and adolescence, and risk of substance abuse problems.<sup>164</sup> Research suggests that alcohol and drug use may increase risk for homicides, including homicides by firearms, and unintentional firearm injury among adults as well as youth.<sup>165</sup> Studies indicate that a significant portion of people who die by firearms had acutely and, often, heavily consumed alcohol prior to their deaths; heavy alcohol use is also correlated with firearm suicide means, suggesting that heavy drinkers are also more likely to choose firearms over other suicide means when compared to non-drinkers.<sup>166</sup>

Recognizing these challenges, the Special Council is making recommendations to promote trauma-informed systems and healing centered engagement statewide; expanding access to mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse services and supports, especially in rural areas; addressing secondary/vicarious trauma experienced by first responders; and developing additional pathways for restoration of firearm rights for individuals who have experienced mental health issues in the past.

## Promoting Trauma-Informed Systems & Healing Centered Engagement

### RECOMMENDATION #20

**The Commonwealth should support trauma-informed systems and healing centered engagement approaches as models for supporting communities, survivors, and individuals who have experienced trauma and violence, including gun violence.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

As described previously, research suggests that traumatic experiences – especially those early in life – 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.<sup>167</sup>

Communities across the country 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.<sup>168</sup> Many communities are also embracing a “healing-centered approach” that builds on individual and community assets to foster well-being rather than dwelling on the pathology of trauma.<sup>169</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

Building on Pennsylvania’s recent efforts to increase the adoption of trauma-informed approaches in schools,<sup>170</sup> the Special Council on Gun Violence believes more work is needed to promote individual and community healing, especially in the wake of gun violence.

- **Action Step:** Building on momentum in Pennsylvania and other states, the Commonwealth should become a “Trauma-Informed State,” either through legislation or executive action, which would establish a common language and understanding of trauma and identify specific actions at the state level.
- **Action Step:** Continue to support school-based trauma-informed efforts to identify needs and address gaps related to providing appropriate early interventions with children and youth, and explore promising practices like “Handle With Care.”
- **Action Step:** Ensure that any training, drills, or preparation of students in schools and other settings that include youth and other vulnerable populations are developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed.
- **Action Step:** Provide training and learning opportunities for individuals and organizations in recognition of trauma and healing centered approaches.

## Expanding Access to Mental Health Supports and Services

### RECOMMENDATION #21

**Increase investments in mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services, especially in rural communities.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Many stakeholders, including multiple Workgroups, focused on the limited availability of high-quality mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and other critical healthcare services, especially in rural areas, as a significant gap that needs to be addressed.

A recent report from the Hospital and Health System Association published in 2018 ranked Pennsylvania below the national average for access to mental health care providers, with a statewide average of 179 mental health care practitioners per 100,000 residents – below the national average of 214 providers per 100,000 people.<sup>171</sup> Rural counties, on average, have even fewer mental health practitioners available, ranging from 88.5 per 100,000 in Mifflin County to just 12 per 100,000 in Juniata County.<sup>172</sup> This often means long drives to access care.

Telemedicine and telepsychiatry are promising models to potentially alleviate these challenges; however, it is important to consider that many of the same areas that have sparse mental health and behavioral health providers are also part of the “digital divide”; Pennsylvania’s rural counties have substantially lower connectivity speeds and limited access to broadband compared with the rest of the state.<sup>173</sup>

Demand for these services has outpaced available funding and resources. In 2018, there were 113,704 hospital stays for mental disorders in Pennsylvania – a statewide rate of 88.8 per 100,000 residents – with more hospitalizations in areas of higher poverty (163.3 per 100,000) and lower levels of education (159.4 per 100,000).<sup>174</sup> These demands come at a time when many county agencies are trying to stay afloat in the wake of a 2013 state budget cut to mental health and intellectual disabilities services that has not been restored.<sup>175</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

Mental and community-based services are essential for ensuring people in crisis can get the help they need when they need it. The Special Council on Gun Violence believes that it should not be harder to access these critical services than it is to acquire firearms. As such, the Commonwealth should significantly increase funding to support the needs of individuals and communities impacted by drug abuse, mental illness, and other issues. In addition, the state should take steps to increase availability of promising tools like telepsychiatry and telemedicine by bolstering infrastructure and adopting comprehensive telehealth legislation.

- **Action Step:** Enhance capacity of county-based mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services to take on increased demands for services and supports by restoring base funding for counties and significantly increasing and sustaining federal and state investments in these critical supports.
- **Action Step:** Expand rural access to mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services, including expanding use of technology such as telepsychiatry and telemedicine.

## RECOMMENDATION #22

**Reduce stigma and promote resiliency and wellness among professionals working in public health, public safety, law enforcement, health and human services, and related systems.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Research shows that repeated exposure to severe trauma coupled with the high amounts of job-related stress placed on first responders can lead to an increased risk for adverse mental health and behavioral health outcomes.<sup>176</sup> These include difficulties with interpersonal relationships, increased substance use, depression, and other concerns.<sup>177</sup> Importantly, research also suggests that specialized training, access to mental health supports, and promoting protective factors such as assurance of personal and team capabilities are associated with reduced stress and improved outcomes.<sup>178</sup>

Subject matter experts and Workgroup members shared examples of effective peer-to-peer supports and other initiatives aimed at reducing stigma associated with mental health issues within the first responder community. These initiatives include the Pennsylvania State Police’s Member Assistance Program, which provides confidential peer support to “Listen and Refer” for issues related to substance abuse and traumatic incidents, including firearm-related incidents.<sup>179</sup> Stakeholders noted the benefit of these programs, while acknowledging that many smaller agencies, especially those in rural communities, lack access to these types of supports.

### PROPOSED APPROACH

- **Action Step:** Expand access to mental health treatment and supports for professionals called to respond to incidents of gun violence.
- **Action Step:** Build resiliency and wellness by reducing stigma related to mental health in the first responder community by promoting adoption of best practices, including information about expected immediate or long-term reactions to secondary or vicarious trauma.
- **Action Step:** Increase access to peer-to-peer support models, especially for smaller agencies in rural communities.
- **Action Step:** Review resources developed in response to the federal Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017, including recent reports published by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), for model programs.<sup>180</sup>

## Pathways to Restoration of Gun Rights

## RECOMMENDATION #23

**Address concerns related to unintended consequences of firearm prohibitions for individuals with involuntary mental health commitments.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Under current law, Pennsylvanians who are subject to involuntary mental health commitments under Sections 302, 303, and 304 of the Mental Health Procedures Act are prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms.<sup>181</sup> Section 6111.1 of the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act provides for a process by which individuals may petition the court to review the sufficiency of



the evidence upon which the commitment was based and, if deemed insufficient, order the record of commitment be expunged.<sup>182</sup> However, this process can be challenging to navigate, especially without the aid of legal services, which can be cost-prohibitive.

During a recent Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee hearing focused on mental health and Second Amendment rights, several individuals providing testimony noted that the prospect of a lifetime ban on firearm ownership may prevent people from seeking treatment for loved ones.<sup>183</sup> The Special Council heard similar concerns expressed by stakeholders, including gun rights advocates and public health experts who called for consideration of new pathways for Pennsylvanians who have experienced a mental health crises in the past to demonstrate their ability to responsibly own a firearm.

### **PROPOSED APPROACH**

The Special Council recommends the Joint State Government Commission study and make recommendations for potential legislative amendments to the Mental Health Procedures Act and/or Uniform Firearms Act that address concerns and to identify potential exceptions that do not undermine public safety. The Commission should also identify key stakeholder and relevant policies and procedures that would need to be addressed if changes in state law were made, such as educating patients about restoration alternatives upon discharge.

- **Action Step:** Explore potential amendments to the Mental Health Procedures Act 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.).
- **Action Step:** If legislative changes are adopted, support local implementation by conducting stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, as well as provide training for relevant agencies.



## IV. COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

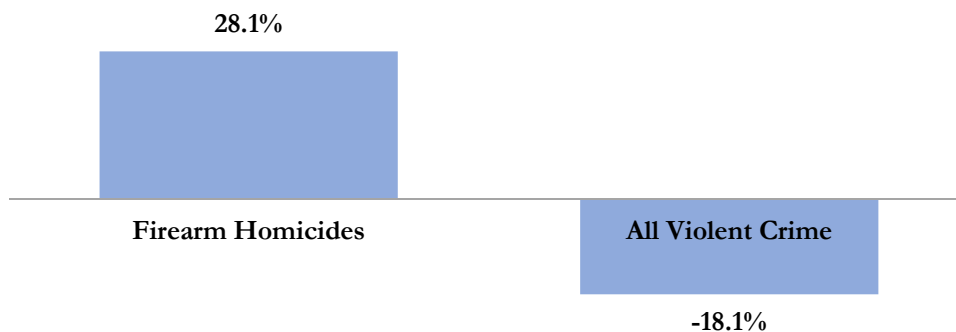


*“[K]nowing you can just get shot and knowing that I live so far away from school that if I walk down the wrong block and I don’t notice somebody sees that I’m not supposed to be there, then they pull out a gun – that’s my life... How many of us have to die before we say enough is enough?”*

- Student, Philadelphia, PA

Recent data from the Pennsylvania State Police’s Uniform Crime Report indicates that while overall violent crime rates are down, the total number of homicides in the Commonwealth has increased in recent years.<sup>184</sup> As shown in Figure 15, below, while the number of violent crimes in Pennsylvania has decreased from 2014 to 2017 (-18.1%), the number of firearm homicides has increased dramatically over that same time period – 28.1%.<sup>185</sup> Firearms are used in three out of four homicides, usually handguns (60%).<sup>186</sup>

**Figure 15. Annual Changes in Violent Crime vs. Firearm Homicides (2014-2017)<sup>187</sup>**



In Pennsylvania’s largest city, Philadelphia, 351 people were murdered in 2019 – the highest level in a decade; there was also an increase (34%) in the number of cases filed involving an aggravated assault with a gun.<sup>188</sup> Police cite arguments as the top motive among homicides in the city.<sup>189</sup> In addition to homicides, the city also experienced a rise in nonfatal shootings (1,435 shooting victims – including more than 100 children – were recorded in 2019 compared with 1,401 in 2018).<sup>190</sup>

But community gun violence is not isolated to Philadelphia. Analysis of data from the CDC indicates that Pennsylvania had the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>191</sup>

Interpersonal gun violence disproportionately affects communities of color across the country and in Pennsylvania. Between 2012-2018, nearly 2,900 black and Hispanic civilians were murdered with firearms in the Commonwealth, representing 77.4% of gun homicide victims.<sup>192</sup> And while men are more likely than women to be victims of firearm-related homicide, black men in Pennsylvania were nearly 30 times more likely than white men to be murdered using guns (43.6 deaths per 100,000 vs. 1.48, respectively).<sup>193</sup> In addition, research suggests that nationally, unarmed black civilians are nearly five times more likely than unarmed white civilians to be shot and killed by law enforcement.<sup>194</sup>

## Building Trust & Legitimacy

### RECOMMENDATION #24

**Develop and implement strategies that build trust and promote better accountability between law enforcement, public health and human services, and other agencies and the communities they serve.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Trust is foundational to any effort, especially preventing and reducing community gun violence. Research has long supported the notion that individuals are more likely to follow the law when they believe in the legitimacy of those responsible for enforcing it; this legitimacy is earned when systems act in procedurally just ways.<sup>195</sup> The Special Council believes more can be done to promote training and peer learning opportunities for professionals and communities alike regarding strategies to improve relationships and . These efforts should focus on elevating what's already working, such as initiatives funded through PCCD's grant programs that promote trust, transparency, and accountability between agencies and the communities they serve.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should continue to support evidence-informed efforts that build positive relationships and trust between law enforcement and justice practitioners and communities. The Office should also develop mechanisms to meaningfully engage communities in state-level efforts.

- **Action Step:** Identify best practices and models to provide additional training for professionals in public safety, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems on strategies to improve relationships with communities, including those addressing implicit bias, trauma, crises response, de-escalation techniques, and other issues.
- **Action Step:** PCCD should continue to promote and develop programs, frameworks, resources and lessons learned from successful grant-funded initiatives that should be replicated in Pennsylvania.
- **Action Step:** The Office of Gun Violence Prevention should work with others to create spaces for state and local policymakers to hear directly from communities and key stakeholders about what strategies are working well, where challenges remain, and what is needed to improve relationships.

## Addressing Illegal Guns and Firearm-Related Crimes

### RECOMMENDATION #25

**State and local law enforcement agencies should continue to work together and with communities to identify effective and practical strategies for addressing illegal guns and preventing firearm-related crime.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Many stakeholders expressed concern over the number of illegal guns in many communities across the Commonwealth. A review of available research and data suggest these concerns are well-founded. Straw purchasing is the most common channel identified in trafficking investigations, and there are an estimated 30,000 attempted straw purchases reported by licensed firearm dealers nationally.<sup>196</sup> The largest share of firearms diverted into the illegal market, however, come from corrupt retail gun dealers.<sup>197</sup>

In addition, while Pennsylvania law requires tracing of guns used in crimes, but implementation of this 2007 requirement by law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth has been limited.<sup>198</sup> A new “Track + Trace” initiative was launched in 2019 by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General to increase participation through a network of federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.<sup>199</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

To address this issue, the Special Council recommends that PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention work closely with other state agencies, including the Pennsylvania State Police and the Office of Attorney General, as well as local partners to analyze and recommend effective strategies to reduce availability of illegal guns and prevent firearm-related crime. This should include an exploration of available data and research around gun buyback programs, preventing and reducing straw purchases, and understanding impacts of emerging trends in firearms used in crimes, such as “ghost guns.”

- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should establish an interagency workgroup comprised of state and local stakeholders to analyze available data and research to recommend effective strategies to reduce availability of illegal guns and prevent firearm-related crime (including gun buyback programs, preventing straw purchases, addressing “ghost guns,” and other issues).

### RECOMMENDATION #26

**State and local law enforcement should work with federal partners to explore strategies to reduce the number of unsolved homicides by firearms in the Commonwealth.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Analysis of data from 55 major U.S. cities suggests that half of all homicides do not result in an arrest; this includes 45% of 3,037 tracked homicides without an arrest in Philadelphia.<sup>200</sup> Data from the FBI indicates a national clearance rate of approximately 60% in homicide cases.

In addition to presenting public safety concerns, unsolved homicides also come with significant costs for those who lose friends, family members, and neighbors and are left without answers. During its public hearing on “Reducing Community Gun Violence,” members of the Special Council heard firsthand testimony from families struggling with the pain of losing a loved one and having those cases go unsolved.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Special Council recommends building on existing efforts and enhancing partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels to increase the number of solved homicides by firearms in the Commonwealth through a joint task force or similar model. The Commonwealth should also continue to promote efforts that build trust between communities and law enforcement to increase rates of community-based reporting, as well as make investments to reduce backlogs at forensic laboratories across the state.

- **Action Step:** PSP should work with the ATF and FBI, as well as local law enforcement, to identify and implement strategies to improve the number of unsolved homicides through a joint task force or similar model. The joint task force should identify current practice in the field, including potential barriers and available data.
- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should also explore strategies to increase utilization of eTrace and PICS for confiscated firearms by local law enforcement.
- **Action Steps:** PCCD should continue to promote community-based reporting and efforts to strengthen relationships between communities and law enforcement, as well as reduce forensic evidence backlogs at laboratories across the Commonwealth.

#### **RECOMMENDATION #27**

**Explore evidence-informed pre-trial interventions and supports that provide alternative pathways for individuals arrested with firearm-related offenses, if appropriate.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

For decades, problem-solving courts have been used by the justice system to address underlying problems that contribute to certain criminal offenses.<sup>201</sup> In Pennsylvania, many counties have adopted problem-solving courts, including Drug/DUI Courts, Mental Health Courts, Veterans Courts, and other models; PCCD has provided financial and technical support to dozens of problem-solving courts across the Commonwealth since 1999.<sup>202</sup> Interviews with stakeholders and a review of available research conducted by consultants engaged by PCCD suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the intersections between unrecognized or untreated trauma among people who have been arrested because of firearm-related crimes.<sup>203</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

To address these concerns, the Commonwealth should explore evidence-informed pre-trial interventions and supports, such as the problem-solving court model, focused on low-risk offenders arrested for firearm-related offenses. These efforts should include gathering available data and information on past and current initiatives in Pennsylvania as well as national models.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should work with key stakeholders, such as its Criminal Justice Advisory Committee and Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee, to

identify promising models and develop strategies to reduce rates of incarceration among offenders, especially youth, in low-risk, first-time firearm-related offenses.

#### RECOMMENDATION #28

**Strengthen pre-release interventions, services, and supports for individuals convicted of firearm-related offenses and provide comprehensive reentry programs for returning citizens.**

##### WHAT WE KNOW

During its public hearing in Philadelphia, the Special Council heard testimony from formerly incarcerated individuals who raised concerns about the lack of comprehensive supports for those who are arrested and serve time because of firearm-related offenses. More research, data, and resources are needed to determine how and why people became involved in gun violence and to deploy strategies from the pre-trial to pre-release spectrum to reduce the likelihood of future incidents upon release from custody or incarceration.

Recently published research from the U.S. Sentencing Commission confirms this need, finding that firearms offenders recidivated at a higher rate than non-firearms offenders, and also recidivated more quickly.<sup>204</sup>

##### PROPOSED APPROACH

Additional resources are needed to support and strengthen mentoring and partnerships between law enforcement, justice practitioners, and community-based organizations focused on determining individuals' needs and identifying relevant programs and services that can reduce the likelihood they will engage in violence upon release.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should work with key stakeholders to develop strategies to connect individuals being released from prison to community support systems that include counseling on compliance with parole requirements restricting access to firearms.

## Supporting Effective Community-Based Initiatives

#### RECOMMENDATION #29

**Prioritize direct, multi-year investments in effective community-led efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence and address resource disparities.**

##### WHAT WE KNOW

During its public hearing in Philadelphia, members of the Special Council heard directly from people on the front lines of preventing, interrupting, and reducing gun violence in neighborhoods and communities across the Commonwealth. Many of these grassroots organizations reported operating with small budgets, majority volunteer staff, and significant capacity constraints, and shared frustrations over the hurdles they face to receive funding.

Larger institutions, including research organizations and universities, pointed to a need for increased understanding of what makes community prevention, intervention, and response efforts effective through rigorous data collection, research, and evaluation – a high bar that often

feels out of reach for the groups who are doing the day-to-day direct work of violence prevention.

### **RECOMMENDED APPROACH**

The Special Council recognizes the need to promote community collaboration and make direct investments that support and sustain these community- and neighborhood-led efforts. This recommendation focuses on bringing together key stakeholders to move beyond the status quo and identify tangible strategies that leverage all available assets within communities – money, expertise, social capital – to effectively combat gun violence.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should work with relevant stakeholders to identify strategies to address resource gaps for grassroots violence prevention efforts, such as expanding voluntary payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements and/or requiring academic research institutions to provide funding and/or research support as part of their non-profit/tax-exempt status.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should support community-led programs that address community gun violence through funding, technical assistance, and research/evaluation, and should explore the possibility of multi-year grants for communities most impacted by gun violence to promote sustainability.
- **Action Step:** 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 capacity and coalition building, peer support, sharing best practices, and helping inform work/decisions of state leaders.
- **Action Step:** Support community-led investments in low-cost blight reduction and measure impacts on gun violence reduction.

### **RECOMMENDATION #30**

**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.**

#### **WHAT WE KNOW**

A Philadelphia student shared the daily reality of walking to and from school each day worried about being in the wrong place at the wrong time during testimony at the Special Council’s public hearing on “Reducing Community Gun Violence.” They implored members to consider ways to protect students from having to choose between going to school and being safe.

Research unfortunately demonstrates the urgency of this student’s concerns. Youth are more than twice as likely as the general population to be victims of violent crimes, and youth from low-income neighborhoods are significantly more likely than their peers in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods to witness severe violence, including gun violence.<sup>205</sup> And data from the national 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey indicates that 6.7% of high school students had not gone to school during at least one day in the past month because of safety concerns; Black students (9.0%) and Hispanic students (9.4%) were more likely to skip school because of safety concerns than white students (4.9%).<sup>206</sup>

### PROPOSED APPROACH

The Special Council is recommending that the Commonwealth support local efforts to implement and sustain safe routes for youth and adults in communities with high rates of gun violence. This includes coordinating available resources at state agencies to collect and analyze available data and promote safe school transportation options for students.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should support local efforts to implement and sustain safe routes, particularly in “hot spot” areas.
- **Action Step:** The Pennsylvania Department of Education should work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and PCCD to disseminate and promote safe school transportation alternatives for students in areas with high rates of gun violence.





## V. TRAINING & EDUCATION: ENHANCING PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & RESPONSE SKILLS

Numerous stakeholders raised training for professionals serving in key systems as a priority for addressing issues ranging from gun suicides to domestic violence-related shootings to community gun violence. These professionals included state and local law enforcement, first responders, dispatchers, healthcare practitioners, social service agencies, justice practitioners, and others working to address gun violence in the Commonwealth.

The Special Council's recommendation in this area focuses on increasing these professionals' knowledge and skills in areas like trauma, de-escalation, lethal means reduction, and identifying dynamics of power and control in cases of potential domestic violence or intimate partner violence. By expanding access to initial and ongoing professional learning opportunities, tailored to specific sectors and settings, the Special Council believes Pennsylvania can enhance the quality and consistency of responses to crises and traumatic events.

### Improving Responses to Crises & Traumatic Events

#### RECOMMENDATION #31

**Increase training for professionals serving in key systems on issues like trauma, de-escalation, lethal means reduction, and identifying dynamics of power and control, among other concerns.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

Given the important functions that many professionals play in preventing and responding to crises and traumatic events, including gun violence, it is important that they participate in meaningful, evidence-informed professional development and training programs that can build skills and increase awareness of key issues. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of increasing ongoing training for law enforcement and allied professionals, recognizing that even if initial training was offered on topics related to gun violence, it may be several years – or even decades – since that training was received. Ensuring up-to-date information, tailored to specific responsibilities and scenarios, will help improve the consistency and quality of response efforts and other services offered by these professionals to members of the public.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

- **Action Step:** Provide training and technical assistance to healthcare providers and first responders to increase utilization of evidence-informed strategies to promote lethal means reduction and how to talk with survivors/victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence about access to firearms as part of discussions about risk and safety.
- **Action Step:** Increase the number of law enforcement officers, justice practitioners, and allied professionals participating in initial and ongoing high-quality professional education

opportunities on how to identify domestic violence and intimate partner violence cases, understanding dynamics of power and control, and interacting with victims/survivors.

- **Action Step:** Expand use of models that improve interactions by law enforcement, justice practitioners, and allied professionals with people in crisis and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Action Step:** Promote training on de-escalation and reduction of force techniques for law enforcement, particularly in cases involving a firearm or “suicide by cop” attempts.



## VI. COORDINATED PLANNING & RESPONSE: ENHANCING PREPARATION, MITIGATION, RESPONSE & RECOVERY EFFORTS



***“Collaborations in planning for a response to an incident of mass violence that are victim-centered and trauma-informed are essential to reducing the inevitable chaos that such an incident will create... Coordination between response agencies, victim assistance and compensation agencies and nonprofit agencies needs to be discussed and exercised so that the moment of disaster is not when people are meeting each other and figuring out how to work together.”***

*- Tara S. Hughes, LCSW-R, Invicta Crisis Solutions*

*Testimony at Public Hearing on “Combating Mass Shootings,” November 21, 2019*

Because gun violence intersects with multiple systems – public safety, health and human services, victim services, and others – ensuring coordinated planning and response efforts is critical. During its public hearings and stakeholder Workgroup meetings, the Special Council heard a call for increased proactive collaboration among key stakeholders, including promising practices to increase communities’ capacity to respond effectively during public safety and public health emergency events, including shootings.

This section of recommendations and action steps aligns with the phases of emergency management, shown in Figure 15 below.

**Figure 15. Phases of Emergency Management and Preparedness<sup>207</sup>**



## Prevention & Mitigation

### RECOMMENDATION #32

**Increase use of threat assessment and management practices to identify, prevent, and mitigate risks in communities.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

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.<sup>208</sup> 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 disconcerting communications prior to their attacks.<sup>209</sup> 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.<sup>210</sup>

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

Recognizing the value of these practices and considering the steps Pennsylvania has already taken to increase the use of tip-lines and threat assessment practices in schools,<sup>211</sup> the Special Council on Gun Violence recommends expanding the use of evidence-based threat assessment and management practices in more settings and communities across the Commonwealth.

- **Action Step:** Encourage the establishment of multidisciplinary threat assessment teams in settings beyond education, including offering relevant training for licensed healthcare professionals, law enforcement officers, human resource (HR) directors, and other professionals.
- **Action Step:** 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).
- **Action Step:** Increase awareness and utilization of available tip-lines for reporting concerning behavior, such as Safe2Say Something (schools) and the “See Something, Send Something” Program (general public).

## Emergency Planning & Response Efforts

### RECOMMENDATION #33

**Improve capacity to provide timely, comprehensive and high-quality responses to critical incidents, including gun violence, by promoting proactive cross-systems planning, resource mapping, and training for first responders and community members.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

During its Workgroup meetings and public hearings, Special Council members heard from numerous stakeholders about the importance of proactive county- and community-level planning and coordination efforts, citing how these steps can improve awareness of available

resources and increase preparedness for incidents of violence if they occur. While many counties and communities have strong cross-agency public safety and public health partnerships in place, this level of coordination is not consistent across the Commonwealth, especially in rural areas.

### PROPOSED APPROACH

To address that gap, the Special Council believes the state can take several concrete steps. First, the General Assembly should expand Pennsylvania’s current Title 35 mandate to include mass shootings, targeted violence, and mass casualty incident preparedness in congregate care setting emergency management plans. Until these legislative changes are enacted, agencies should encourage the inclusion of training, prevention, and response protocols specific to mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incident planning in local emergency management plans.

Second, the Commonwealth should support expanded capacity of the Pennsylvania State Police’s Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) program to conduct assessments that provide recommendations for practical steps that can be taken to better protect different types of facilities. These include 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.

- **Action Step:** Expand availability of free safety and security assessments through the Pennsylvania State Police RVAT program.
- **Action Step:** Adopt legislative amendments to Title 35 to include mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incidents in emergency management plans for congregate care settings, such as education institutions and healthcare facilities.
- **Action Step:** Provide technical assistance and other supports to communities that facilitate more centralized and coordinated services for individuals affected by mass shootings, targeted violence, and other incidents.

## Providing Coordinated, Person-Centered Care

### RECOMMENDATION #34

**Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered, trauma-informed “Warm Handoff” model.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

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.<sup>212</sup> 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.<sup>213</sup>

A recent study published by *JAMA* suggests that young adults who survive gunshot wounds are more likely than their peers to experience significant negative long-term outcomes, including posttraumatic stress disorder (48.6%), increased substance use (13.2%), and increased unemployment (14.3%), among other issues.<sup>214</sup> Research suggests these negative outcomes are

less likely to occur with early intervention, and by providing coordinated, person-centered care that addresses social, emotional, physical, mental, economic, and other needs.<sup>215</sup>

#### **PROPOSED APPROACH**

Pennsylvania has also seen great success in adopting the “Warm Handoff” model to ensure seamless transitions for opioid overdose survivors from emergency medical care to treatment, increasing the likelihood of long-term recovery.<sup>216</sup> Similarly, the Violence Prevention Initiative<sup>217</sup> through the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) works to provide individuals in emergency rooms and hospitals with immediate access to services and supports that can help them heal post-discharge.

The Special Council believes these approaches should be taken to improve coordination of care for Pennsylvania’s youth and adults who have experienced firearm-related injuries.

- **Action Step:** Support development of post-discharge protocols in hospitals, emergency departments, and other healthcare settings that improve access to services and transition plans for individuals who have experienced firearm related injuries, including attempted suicide by firearms.
- **Action Step:** Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered approach.



## VII. INFORMING BETTER POLICIES & PRACTICES: SUPPORTING GUN VIOLENCE DATA COLLECTION, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

The Governor’s Executive Order tasked the Special Council with identifying, among other things, strategies that improve cross-agency alignment of resources, including data. A consistent theme throughout the Council’s stakeholder engagement was the need to enhance the collection, reporting, sharing, and analyses of data from multiple sources to better understand and address gun violence.

### Enhancing Quality & Availability of Data Related to Firearms

#### RECOMMENDATION #35

**Significantly increase investments in data collection, reporting, analyses, and research focused on fatal and nonfatal firearm-related injuries and crimes.**

#### WHAT WE KNOW

The Governor’s Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence asked the Special Council to consider strategies that better align agency resources, including data. Through its early work, PCCD has identified significant gaps in data analysis and research related to non-fatal firearm injuries resulting from domestic violence-related shootings, suicide by firearms attempts, community gun violence, mass shootings, and accidental shootings. This includes limited research available on the immediate, short-term, and long-term costs – physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial – of firearm-related injuries.

While many public health and public safety agencies track data related to firearms, firearm-related injuries and fatalities, and violent crime, that data is often siloed, limiting the ability of researchers and policymakers alike to improve responses to gun violence. In addition, the voluntary framework of many state-level public health surveillance data collection systems means that some of this information is limited or incomplete.

#### PROPOSED APPROACH

To address these concerns, the Special Council is recommending steps to improve availability and quality of data through new and improved information collection and data sharing methods as well as enhanced research and analyses. Key action steps include increasing participation by coroners/medical examiners and local law enforcement in public health surveillance systems, as well as improving levels of interagency data sharing.

Stakeholders in the Domestic Violence-Related Shootings Workgroup recommended the Special Council consider several strategies to specifically improve reporting and data collection related to domestic violence incidents, including reinstating Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews statewide through legislation and/or funding.

PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should focus its early efforts on using available datasets to understand characteristics and trends in firearm-related incidents and to offer actionable information for use by state and local public health, public safety, and public policy leaders. Specifically, PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should analyze previously unexplored or isolated public health and public safety datasets to better understand the unique dynamics of fatal and nonfatal shootings as well as firearm-related crimes in the Commonwealth.

PCCD is uniquely positioned to advance these efforts as Pennsylvania's justice planning and policymaking agency, and through its role as the Statistical Analysis Center for the Commonwealth.

- **Action Step:** Promote streamlined data sharing and analyses between state and local law enforcement agencies, coroners/medical examiners, courts, state agencies, and other organizations (i.e., research, policy, advocacy) to aid in establishing baseline data and determining impact of policies and practices, including firearm safety training, safe storage practices, education and awareness campaigns, etc.
- **Action Step:** Promote more consistent reporting mechanisms and procedures for law enforcement related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence (i.e., officer records and reports).
- **Action Step:** To better capture fatal and nonfatal injury data related to firearms in Pennsylvania, strongly encourage and incentivize increased participation by coroners/medical examiners and law enforcement in the Pennsylvania Violent Death Reporting System (PA VDRS) and similar surveillance systems.
- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should focus its early efforts on establishing baseline rates using available datasets to conduct basic/descriptive research, especially related to the costs of fatal and nonfatal injuries and crimes related to firearms and should make findings available on its website. State agencies should provide relevant aggregate data and findings from programs like Child Welfare Checks, PA VDRS, Child Death Reviews, and crime data collected through UCR and NIBRS to support these efforts.
- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should adopt legislation reinstating Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews in every county in Pennsylvania and requiring reporting by coroners/medical examiners and law enforcement agencies.
- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should adopt legislation instating Suicide Death Reviews and requiring reporting by coroners/medical examiners.
- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should consider collecting and analyzing available data concerning defensive use of firearms, including cases in which the weapon was not fired, to better understand these situations and fill a current research gap.



## APPENDIX A: Key Terms and Definitions

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1. **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):**<sup>218</sup> A term associated with a 1995 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Foundation study which identified three common forms of adversity that affect children: physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and household challenges. The study found strong positive correlations between the number of ACEs a person experienced and the likelihood of negative outcomes later in life.
2. **Domestic Violence:**<sup>219</sup> Pennsylvania law defines domestic abuse as knowingly, intentionally or recklessly causing bodily injury of any kind, causing fear of bodily injury of any kind, assault (sexual or not sexual), rape, sexually abusing minor children, or knowingly engaging in a repetitive conduct toward a certain person (i.e., stalking) that puts them in fear of bodily injury. These acts can take place between family or household members, sexual partners or those who share biological parenthood in order to qualify as domestic abuse.
3. **Evidence-Based Practices:**<sup>220</sup> Approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. This includes findings established through controlled clinical studies, but other methods of establishing evidence are valid as well.
4. **Evidence-Informed Practices:**<sup>221</sup> Evidence-informed practices use the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. This informed practice allows for innovation while incorporating lessons learned from existing research literature. Ideally, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices should be responsive to individuals' and families' cultural backgrounds, community values, and individual preferences.
5. **Fatality Review Programs:**<sup>222</sup> A fatality review team is a multidisciplinary group of professionals that meets to discuss the circumstances leading to and causing individual deaths in order to improve agency systems and to take action to prevent other deaths. Review teams obtain information on deaths from multiple sources for their discussions on often complex death events. Reviews include representatives with expertise relevant to the deaths and from agencies and services representing death investigation, public health, medicine, law enforcement, social services, mental health, education, etc.
6. **Firearm:**<sup>223</sup> Any pistol or revolver with a barrel length less than 15 inches, any shotgun with a barrel length less than 18 inches or any rifle with a barrel length less than 16 inches, or any pistol, revolver, rifle, or shotgun with an overall length of less than 26 inches. The barrel length of a firearm is determined by measuring from the muzzle of the barrel to the face of the closed action, bolt or cylinder, whichever is applicable. Under the Uniform Firearms Act, firearms also include any weapon which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel any projectile by the action of an explosive or the frame or receiver of the weapon.
7. **Healing Centered Engagement:**<sup>224</sup> A healing centered approach is holistic involving culture, spirituality, civic action and collective healing. A healing-centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively.

8. **Law Enforcement Officer:**<sup>225</sup> Any person employed by any police department or organization of the Commonwealth or political subdivision thereof who is empowered to effect an arrest with or without warrant and who is authorized to carry a firearm in the performance of that person's duties.
9. **License to Carry Firearms:** Individuals 21 years and older may apply for a license to carry firearms (also known as "concealed carry") on their person and in their vehicle by successfully completing an Application for a Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms submitted for consideration by their county's sheriff or chief of police.
10. **Loaded Firearm:**<sup>226</sup> A firearm is loaded if the firing chamber, the nondetachable magazine or, in the case of a revolver, any of the chambers of the cylinder contain ammunition capable of being fired. In the case of a firearm which utilizes a detachable magazine, the term shall mean a magazine suitable for use in said firearm which magazine contains such ammunition and has been inserted in the firearm or is in the same container or, where the container has multiple compartments, the same compartment thereof as the firearm. If the magazine is inserted into a pouch, holder, holster or other protective device that provides for a complete and secure enclosure of the ammunition, then the pouch, holder, holster or other protective device shall be deemed to be a separate compartment.
11. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** A clinical diagnosis that applies to people who have experienced a traumatic event and who suffer a particular constellation of symptoms. A person does not need to meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD to be impacted negatively by trauma or to benefit from trauma-informed care.
12. **Protective Factors:**<sup>227</sup> Characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, or community (including peers and culture) level that are associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduce the negative impact of a risk factor on problem outcomes.
13. **Restoration of Firearms Rights:**<sup>228</sup> Relieving any and all disabilities with respect to a person's right to own, possess, use, control, sell, purchase, transfer, manufacture, receive, ship or transport firearms.
14. **Safe2Say Something Program:**<sup>229</sup> Established by Act 44 of 2018, the *Safe2Say Something* Program teaches students, educators, and administrators in Pennsylvania K-12 schools how (1) to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others, and 2) to anonymously report this information through the *Safe2Say Something* app, website, or 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline. The program is managed by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General in partnership with the nonprofit organization Sandy Hook Promise.
15. **Safety Planning:**<sup>230</sup> Safety planning can occur within a range of contexts, including suicide prevention and intimate partner violence, but are generally used to anticipate and prevent risks to an individual's well-being, including identifying strategies for internal and external supports and interventions when preventive measures do not avert a crisis. Safety planning identifies specific actions that will occur in these cases, and is developed using input from relevant stakeholders, such as families, school personnel, and community-based providers.

16. **Sentencing Guidelines:**<sup>231</sup> Sentencing guidelines are developed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing (pursuant to 42 Pa C.S.A. §2154) to promote sentencing equity and fairness by providing every judge with a common reference point for sentencing similar offenders convicted of similar crimes.
17. **Sportsman's Firearm Permit:**<sup>232</sup> Any person 18 years of age or older licensed to hunt, trap or fish or who has been issued a permit relating to hunting dogs, may, at the time of securing their hunting, furtaking or fishing license or any time after such license has been issued, secure a sportsman's firearm permit from the county treasurer. The sportsman's firearm permit shall be issued immediately and be valid throughout this Commonwealth for a period of five years from the date of issue for any legal firearm, when carried in conjunction with a valid hunting, furtaking or fishing license or permit relating to hunting dogs.
18. **Threat Assessment:**<sup>233</sup> A fact-based process for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behaviors may indicate a threat to the safety of themselves, others, or the broader community.
19. **Trauma:**<sup>234</sup> Includes results from an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual well-being.
20. **Trauma-Informed Approach:**<sup>235</sup> A program, organization, or system that realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.
21. **Vicarious/Secondary Trauma:**<sup>236</sup> The emotional distress that results when an individual hears about the traumatic experiences of another individual. This can result from hearing someone's trauma stories; seeing high levels of distress in the aftermath of a traumatic event; responding to mass violence incidents that have resulted in numerous injuries and deaths; needing to retell an individual's story; reviewing case files; hearing about or responding to the aftermath of violence; and/or seeing photos or images related to the trauma.

**APPENDIX B: 2019-06 Reducing Gun Violence**

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<b>EXECUTIVE ORDER</b> <b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b> <b>Governor's Office</b>	
<b>Subject:</b> Reducing Gun Violence	<b>Number:</b> 2019-06
<b>Date:</b> August 16, 2019	<b>By Direction of:</b> 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 (JJDP);
  - (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 C: Workgroup Meetings and Public Hearing Dates

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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 D: Sales and Transfers of Firearms by Licensed Dealers by County, 2013-2018<sup>237</sup>**

County	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2013-2018	
	Hand Guns	Long Guns	Hand Guns	Long Guns	Hand Guns	Long Guns	Hand guns	Long Guns	Hand Guns	Long Guns	Hand Guns	Long Guns	Hand Guns	Long Guns
Adams	4,790	6,016	3,906	4,740	5,538	6,061	6,257	6,204	5,716	6,588	6,165	7,289	32,372	36,898
Allegheny	28,230	20,975	25,264	16,554	32,205	16,440	35,157	18,150	31,950	16,960	31,231	16,561	184,037	105,640
Armstrong	2,361	1,873	2,427	2,073	2,955	2,161	3,064	2,348	2,590	1,878	2,305	1,994	15,702	12,327
Beaver	5,652	4,624	4,777	3,597	5,509	3,383	5,602	3,508	5,111	3,283	5,938	4,162	32,589	22,557
Bedford	3,553	5,244	2,943	4,557	3,250	4,712	4,053	4,860	3,433	4,743	2,948	4,606	20,180	28,722
Berks	22,782	27,013	19,174	19,421	21,195	17,818	22,799	18,602	21,325	16,815	16,699	15,000	123,974	114,669
Blair	6,191	5,342	4,940	4,976	6,348	5,860	8,166	6,175	6,868	5,956	5,763	5,408	38,276	33,717
Bradford	3,636	5,156	2,629	4,421	3,093	4,847	3,635	4,575	3,073	4,617	2,844	4,299	18,910	27,915
Bucks	21,796	16,207	19,315	16,171	23,131	13,989	26,010	17,227	28,804	18,777	26,198	15,493	145,254	97,864
Butler	10,304	9,278	8,604	8,293	12,349	9,246	15,364	11,203	13,298	10,516	11,547	9,653	71,466	58,189
Cambria	7,049	6,239	5,509	5,181	6,508	5,471	7,930	5,780	7,191	5,546	6,615	5,382	40,802	33,599
Cameron	122	78	65	65	73	36	64	33	52	32	56	41	432	285
Carbon	1,752	1,603	1,339	1,612	1,210	1,113	1,216	1,467	1,146	1,175	879	1,056	7,542	8,026
Centre	3,445	3,585	3,068	3,532	4,226	4,020	5,292	4,683	4,632	4,389	4,613	4,656	25,276	24,865
Chester	8,404	6,405	7,537	5,320	8,860	6,087	10,236	7,244	10,270	6,743	9,399	6,509	54,706	38,308
Clarion	2,757	2,826	1,881	2,554	2,383	2,934	2,746	3,086	2,545	3,285	2,676	3,319	14,988	18,004
Clearfield	13,730	13,036	7,735	9,205	11,230	11,793	13,076	11,766	13,010	13,297	12,020	13,040	70,801	72,137

Clinton	1,050	1,698	1,132	1,801	1,267	1,945	1,401	1,852	1,202	1,675	1,289	1,708	7,341	10,679
Columbia	4,190	3,978	3,832	3,411	4,186	3,641	4,450	4,059	4,480	3,714	4,855	4,102	25,993	22,905
Crawford	2,053	2,722	1,677	2,010	1,970	2,100	2,245	2,267	2,080	2,151	2,372	2,378	12,397	13,628
Cumberland	4,650	5,316	5,258	5,110	8,601	6,706	12,859	9,769	11,732	9,110	10,726	9,805	53,826	45,816
Dauphin	8,230	7,783	5,456	5,882	6,895	6,067	5,925	5,154	6,211	4,790	6,891	5,398	39,608	35,074
Delaware	11,339	5,995	10,022	4,529	11,026	4,271	12,510	5,228	11,957	4,628	10,681	4,856	67,535	29,507
Elk	1,640	2,296	1,601	2,445	1,938	2,199	2,145	2,317	1,692	2,260	1,918	2,600	10,934	14,117
Erie	10,872	11,536	9,203	10,321	10,505	11,079	12,332	11,297	10,711	10,784	8,853	9,340	62,476	64,357
Fayette	6,942	7,062	6,627	5,891	8,960	6,851	8,620	5,521	7,915	5,033	7,980	5,374	47,044	35,732
Forest	15	8	10	7	36	28	297	168	220	248	219	215	797	674
Franklin	6,775	8,397	5,198	6,615	6,272	7,319	7,864	8,260	6,435	7,501	5,233	5,925	37,777	44,017
Fulton	442	623	424	623	448	559	582	608	594	729	617	878	3,107	4,020
Greene	2,262	2,074	1,951	1,939	1,618	1,463	1,343	1,421	1,202	1,389	1,126	1,520	9,502	9,806
Huntingdon	907	1,439	1,230	1,701	1,054	1,578	956	1,411	695	1,089	959	1,494	5,801	8,712
Indiana	2,314	2,967	2,377	2,706	2,502	2,540	2,638	2,625	5,032	2,724	2,789	2,912	17,652	16,474
Jefferson	3,894	3,850	2,996	3,370	3,245	3,226	3,070	3,379	2,718	3,009	2,673	3,298	18,596	20,132
Juniata	714	1,056	514	862	519	895	576	867	399	833	353	825	3,075	5,338
Lackawanna	7,396	6,142	5,684	3,958	6,770	4,512	7,971	4,837	9,112	5,853	8,767	5,505	45,700	30,807
Lancaster	21,949	18,764	19,110	16,019	22,096	15,773	25,267	18,219	22,585	16,830	22,643	18,680	133,650	104,285
Lawrence	5,013	3,736	4,270	2,911	4,384	2,663	4,776	3,098	4,011	2,624	3,862	2,727	26,316	17,759
Lebanon	8,425	7,369	5,967	5,844	7,057	5,887	7,706	6,217	7,141	5,616	5,969	5,298	42,265	36,231

Lehigh	9,711	8,155	8,010	6,129	9,567	6,612	11,418	8,416	10,492	7,252	10,746	7,137	59,944	43,701
Luzerne	15,135	11,305	13,363	9,828	15,007	9,899	15,788	10,905	14,684	9,740	14,028	10,568	88,005	62,245
Lycoming	9,089	9,529	6,629	6,986	7,145	7,165	8,033	7,879	6,876	8,106	7,233	7,147	45,005	46,812
McKean	1,188	1,400	1,082	1,180	1,368	1,386	1,551	1,494	1,463	1,595	1,361	1,604	8,013	8,659
Mercer	4,368	4,365	4,176	3,417	6,324	4,394	7,284	5,193	7,133	5,478	7,328	6,427	36,613	29,274
Mifflin	1,503	1,589	1,459	1,797	1,876	1,795	2,307	1,968	1,958	1,985	2,012	2,053	11,115	11,187
Monroe	6,999	5,754	6,864	5,206	8,218	6,210	10,481	7,549	7,901	5,493	7,403	5,237	47,866	35,449
Montgomery	14,792	12,132	11,984	8,992	13,440	9,160	14,975	10,532	12,944	8,866	11,420	7,688	79,555	57,370
Montour	51	296	98	102	138	150	132	127	106	118	139	100	664	893
Northampton	7,058	7,109	5,782	5,796	6,708	5,612	8,785	6,783	9,196	7,052	8,382	5,967	45,911	38,319
Northumberland	3,070	2,914	2,263	2,315	2,442	2,280	2,480	2,345	2,140	2,160	2,048	2,262	14,443	14,276
Perry	1,467	1,914	1,468	1,546	1,475	1,455	1,962	2,080	1,450	1,657	1,339	1,884	9,161	10,536
Philadelphia	10,356	3,614	10,063	2,906	10,757	2,810	11,736	3,491	11,113	2,804	10,386	2,638	64,411	18,263
Pike	1,070	1,384	907	1,038	1,201	1,067	1,400	1,390	1,962	1,611	2,023	1,952	8,563	8,442
Potter	724	924	606	876	613	910	648	808	520	727	508	762	3,619	5,007
Schuylkill	6,245	6,338	6,003	5,601	6,911	5,846	8,125	6,949	7,277	6,266	6,718	6,642	41,279	37,642
Snyder	1,438	2,360	1,120	2,007	3,216	3,244	3,777	3,824	3,533	3,689	3,474	3,565	16,558	18,689
Somerset	2,169	2,813	1,998	2,699	2,400	2,885	2,925	3,137	2,615	3,270	2,422	3,478	14,529	18,282
Sullivan	99	111	144	200	185	238	277	307	247	306	73	116	1,025	1,278
Susquehanna	1,657	2,637	1,347	1,834	1,540	2,046	1,902	2,236	1,553	1,978	1,548	2,031	9,547	12,762
Tioga	2,502	4,278	2,283	4,153	2,520	4,399	2,816	4,310	2,370	4,367	2,001	4,162	14,492	25,669

Union	970	1,305	588	829	626	946	641	873	395	787	320	656	3,540	5,396
Venango	3,267	3,284	2,417	2,747	2,128	2,253	2,337	2,176	2,015	1,929	2,121	2,136	14,285	14,525
Warren	2,119	2,969	1,849	2,843	1,937	3,241	2,029	2,781	2,003	2,913	1,894	3,150	11,831	17,897
Washington	16,164	10,462	12,801	9,139	13,813	9,165	15,900	9,962	14,075	9,391	13,304	9,123	86,057	57,242
Wayne	5,341	5,355	4,171	4,253	5,166	4,539	5,998	5,478	5,238	4,970	5,128	5,299	31,042	29,894
Westmoreland	16,389	14,362	14,492	12,290	17,235	12,351	17,745	12,586	15,645	11,969	14,870	11,775	96,376	75,333
Wyoming	1,902	2,613	1,787	2,307	1,702	2,565	1,997	2,872	1,923	2,775	1,859	2,915	11,170	16,047
York	15,995	16,469	13,197	12,253	14,741	12,057	17,195	13,417	14,500	12,311	12,997	11,014	88,625	77,521
<b><i>Total (Statewide)</i></b>	<b><i>420,464</i></b>	<b><i>388,051</i></b>	<b><i>354,603</i></b>	<b><i>321,496</i></b>	<b><i>421,811</i></b>	<b><i>333,953</i></b>	<b><i>478,844</i></b>	<b><i>367,353</i></b>	<b><i>442,465</i></b>	<b><i>348,755</i></b>	<b><i>413,756</i></b>	<b><i>342,794</i></b>	<b><i>2,531,943</i></b>	<b><i>2,102,402</i></b>

**APPENDIX E: Licenses to Carry Firearms Issued by County, 2013-2018<sup>238</sup>**

<b>County</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2013-2018</b>
Adams	2,704	2,008	1,865	3,313	3,289	3,165	16,344
Allegheny	20,505	17,458	19,612	23,131	22,175	23,837	126,718
Armstrong	3,421	2,542	2,570	3,672	3,874	3,396	19,475
Beaver	5,037	4,094	4,388	5,291	5,647	5,184	29,641
Bedford	1,797	1,485	1,639	2,324	2,114	2,058	11,417
Berks	10,030	7,846	8,356	11,477	10,736	9,693	58,138
Blair	3,948	2,924	3,087	4,178	3,820	3,927	21,884
Bradford	2,153	1,511	1,496	2,316	2,230	1,971	11,677
Bucks	10,559	7,808	8,833	11,598	9,839	10,473	59,110
Butler	7,113	5,176	5,627	6,919	7,839	7,073	39,747
Cambria	4,489	3,494	4,068	5,647	5,817	4,657	28,172
Cameron	259	163	189	266	277	270	1,424
Carbon	1,990	1,741	1,853	2,375	2,364	2,067	12,390
Centre	3,662	3,278	3,971	4,008	4,026	3,511	22,456
Chester	6,699	5,347	5,109	8,061	7,760	6,515	39,491
Clarion	1,748	1,257	1,312	1,690	1,895	1,742	9,644
Clearfield	3,125	2,618	3,035	3,587	3,520	3,305	19,190
Clinton	1,311	1,088	1,293	1,558	1,462	1,421	8,133
Columbia	2,428	1,538	1,591	2,119	2,326	2,400	12,402
Crawford	3,061	2,767	2,556	2,581	2,432	2,733	16,130
Cumberland	5,391	4,457	5,110	6,249	5,358	5,766	32,331
Dauphin	5,661	4,917	5,053	5,659	6,269	5,394	32,953
Delaware	6,961	6,085	6,357	8,667	7,810	7,803	43,683
Elk	1,291	1,157	1,189	1,566	1,687	1,343	8,233
Erie	6,783	6,108	6,319	7,799	6,712	6,929	40,650
Fayette	4,946	4,883	5,497	5,479	5,059	5,428	31,292
Forest	306	248	225	311	340	289	1,719
Franklin	3,413	2,913	2,995	4,359	3,535	3,673	20,888
Fulton	690	570	568	767	597	708	3,900
Greene	1,191	963	1,322	1,339	1,200	1,377	7,392
Huntingdon	1,411	1,031	1,225	1,503	1,315	1,527	8,012
Indiana	2,920	2,361	2,580	3,222	3,816	2,982	17,881
Jefferson	2,236	1,624	1,881	2,042	2,365	2,189	12,337
Juniata	740	614	727	823	875	751	4,530
Lackawanna	3,808	3,278	4,245	5,154	4,792	5,159	26,436
Lancaster	10,483	9,231	11,230	12,768	10,909	10,819	65,440
Lawrence	2,992	2,492	2,334	2,888	3,128	2,937	16,771

Lebanon	3,377	2,752	3,020	3,585	3,361	3,695	19,790
Lehigh	5,229	4,759	5,368	6,419	6,322	5,839	33,936
Luzerne	7,234	5,495	6,416	7,594	7,270	6,971	40,980
Lycoming	4,293	3,381	3,680	4,350	4,394	3,781	23,879
McKean	2,294	2,080	2,225	2,796	2,892	2,831	15,118
Mercer	3,384	2,780	2,382	3,448	3,824	3,125	18,943
Mifflin	null	1,041	1,321	1,572	1,543	1,506	6,983
Monroe	null	2,322	2,124	3,209	2,782	3,824	14,261
Montgomery	null	7,190	7,667	11,514	10,477	8,899	45,747
Montour	null	375	423	580	564	546	2,488
Northampton	null	3,739	3,864	5,940	5,311	5,787	24,641
Northumberland	null	2,183	2,588	2,959	3,273	2,897	13,900
Perry	null	1,555	1,585	2,124	2,000	1,887	9,151
Philadelphia	null	7,146	6,435	8,881	10,393	9,154	42,009
Pike	null	1,542	1,330	1,858	1,771	1,971	8,472
Potter	null	1,361	1,743	1,246	1,203	1,318	6,871
Schuylkill	null	3,225	4,059	4,644	4,490	4,469	20,887
Snyder	null	858	957	1,474	1,314	1,230	5,833
Somerset	null	1,921	2,178	2,992	2,758	2,822	12,671
Sullivan	null	214	206	288	310	274	1,292
Susquehanna	null	1,212	1,283	1,998	1,876	1,917	8,286
Tioga	null	1,073	1,137	1,438	1,554	1,590	6,792
Union	null	866	900	1,127	1,265	1,150	5,308
Venango	null	1,711	1,649	2,061	1,907	2,044	9,372
Warren	null	2,247	2,180	2,493	2,296	2,464	11,680
Washington	null	5,212	5,431	6,761	6,716	6,688	30,808
Wayne	null	1,915	1,787	2,920	2,350	1,912	10,884
Westmoreland	null	11,178	11,864	13,556	13,564	12,993	63,155
Wyoming	null	959	829	1,098	1,236	1,168	5,290
York	null	8,415	9,406	12,934	12,733	11,183	54,671
Total (Statewide)	183,073	219,782	237,344	300,565	290,958	280,407	1,512,129

**APPENDIX F: States with Licensing Requirements for Firearm Purchase or Possession<sup>239</sup>**

State	Type of Firearms	Type of License	Safety Training or Exam Required?	Duration
California	All firearms	Firearms Safety Certificate	Yes	5 years
Connecticut	All firearms	Permit to Purchase	Yes	5 years
District of Columbia	All firearms	Registration	Yes	So long as eligible
Hawaii	All firearms	Permit to Purchase	Yes (handguns)	10 days
			No (long guns)	1 year
Iowa	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	No	5 years
Illinois	All firearms	License to Own	No	10 years
Maryland	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	Yes	10 years
Massachusetts	All firearms and ammunition devices	License to Own	Yes	6 years
		Permit to Purchase (handguns only)	Yes	10 days
Michigan	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	No	30 days
Nebraska	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	No	3 years
New Jersey	All firearms	Permit to Purchase	No	So long as eligible (long guns) 90 days (handguns)
New York	Handguns	License to Own	No	5 years
North Carolina	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	No	5 years
Rhode Island	Handguns	Permit to Purchase	Yes	Unspecified
Washington	Semiautomatic rifles	Firearms Safety Certificate	Yes	5 years

## APPENDIX G: States with Lost or Stolen Firearm Reporting Requirements<sup>240</sup>

Eleven states plus the District of Columbia currently have requirements related to reporting of lost and/or stolen firearms.

- Five of the 11 states/jurisdictions require reporting immediately or within 24 hours of discovery;
- Most states/jurisdictions' reporting requirements apply to all firearm types;
- Two states – New Jersey and Washington – impose civil liability for failure to report a lost/stolen firearm; and
- Two states/jurisdictions tie reporting of lost/stolen firearms to license and registration requirements/conditions (Massachusetts and DC).<sup>241</sup>

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 the person’s possession or control to local law enforcement.	Immediate	Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2923.20(A)(5).
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

**APPENDIX H: States with Background Check Requirements Exceeding Federal Standards<sup>242</sup>**

As of last year, 21 states, including Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia have extended background check requirements beyond the minimum criteria established through federal law (Brady Act).

- 12 states require **universal background checks** at the point of sale/transfer for all classes of firearms and from all sellers (licensed or private/unlicensed).
- 2 states (Maryland and Pennsylvania) require **point of sale background checks for all handgun sales/transfers** (both licensed and unlicensed sellers), but not for long guns.
- 4 states required **permits issued after background checks** in order to buy any firearm, and 4 states require permits and background checks for the purchase of handguns.
- Several states have also enacted laws **imposing additional timeframes for background checks** (or creating waiting periods) beyond the 3-day federal “default proceed” provision that allows sales through FFLs to occur when a background check has not been completed within 3 days.

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

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?
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 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> )

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?
Washington	All Firearms	Yes; 10 days for long guns; up to 60 days for handguns	Yes	No	No

## **APPENDIX I: Safe Storage and Child Access Prevention Laws**

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### Current Federal and State Laws

**Federal:** Federal law requires that licensed firearm importers, manufacturers, and dealers provide purchasers/transferees of handguns with a secure gun storage or safety device.<sup>243</sup> There are no CAP laws at the federal level, and no federal requirements or standards for safe storage of firearms or locking devices beyond those required for handguns sold by licensed dealers.<sup>244</sup>

**State:** Twenty-seven (27) states and the District of Columbia currently have enacted CAP laws. In addition, 11 states currently have requirements related to firearm locking devices and/or safe storage of firearms. (Note: A summary/crosswalk of states with CAP and/or safe storage/locking device requirements currently in place is available beginning on page 3 of this document.)

### Child Access Prevention Laws – Common Exceptions

Common exceptions to CAP laws include:

- Storing in a locked container;
- Minor gains access to firearm via illegal entry of premises;
- Firearm is used for hunting, sport shooting or agricultural purposes;
- Minor uses gun in defense of self or others; and/or
- Child has completed a firearm safety course.<sup>245</sup>

In addition, several states provide a lesser standard for parents/guardians (i.e., found guilty only if they provide firearms to children when they know of a substantial risk that the minor will use the firearm to commit a crime).<sup>246</sup>

**Summary/Crosswalk of State CAP Laws and Safe Storage/Locking Device Requirements<sup>247</sup>**

State	CAP Law	Firearms Must Be Kept Locked	Locks Must Accompany Dealer Sales	Locks Must Accompany Private Sales	Locks Must Meet Standards or Be Approved	Description
California	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child “may” or “is likely to” gain access to the firearm, regardless of whether the child uses the firearm or causes injury or whether the firearm is loaded. Civil liability is also imposed on parent/guardian of minor for damages resulting from minor’s discharge of a firearm if they fail to store firearms properly.</p> <p><b>Firearms Must Be Kept Locked (Sometimes):</b> California requires firearm owners to keep firearms in a locked container or use a locking device if they live with a person prohibited under state or federal law from possessing a firearm.</p> <p><b>Locking Devices:</b> All firearms manufactured in the state or sold/transferred by a state licensed dealer (including private transfers conducted through licensed dealers) must include or be accompanied by a firearm safety device approved by the state Department of Justice. Sales/transfers are exempt if the purchaser offers proof they already own an approved safety device or gun safe meeting state standards. Locking devices must also meet rigorous state standards established by regulations promulgated by the California Attorney General and tested by certified laboratories.</p>
Colorado	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (handguns only).</p>

Connecticut	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>	Sometimes	Handguns only	Handguns only	Yes	<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage, regardless of whether the firearm was loaded. The state also imposes liability in civil actions on persons who fail to secure firearms securely when a minor gains access and causes injury/death.</p> <p><b>Firearms Must Be Kept Locked (Sometimes):</b> Connecticut requires that firearm owners keep firearms safely stored/locked (loaded only) if they live with a person prohibited under state or federal law from possessing a firearm.</p> <p><b>Locking Devices and Standards:</b> Connecticut requires trigger locks on all handguns sold in the state, including private sales. The state also requires that all handguns sold or transferred (other than wholesale) include a trigger lock or other locking/safety device. State law also establishes standards for locking devices, requiring they be accessible by key or electronic/mechanical accessory specific to the locking device and constructed of material strong enough to prevent them from being disabled easily.</p>
Delaware	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (loaded firearms only).
District of Columbia	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child “may” or “is likely to” gain access to the firearm, regardless of whether the child uses the firearm or causes injury or whether the firearm is loaded.
Florida	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>					Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage
Georgia	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (handguns only).

Hawaii	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access as a result of negligent storage of a firearm, regardless of whether the firearm was loaded.
Illinois	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;14</i>		Handguns only			<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage. Parent/guardian of a minor under the age of 21 who legally acquire firearms with parent/guardian permission can also be held liable for civil claims for damages resulting from the minor’s use of firearms or ammunition.  <b>Locking Devices:</b> Handguns sold in Illinois by licensed dealers must include an external safety device or an integrated mechanical safety device (trigger lock).
Indiana	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors; applies to all firearms (loaded or unloaded).
Iowa	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;14</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage
Kentucky	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (handguns only).
Maryland	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>		Handguns only		Yes	<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access as a result of negligent storage of a firearm  <b>Locking Devices and Standards (Handguns Only):</b> Maryland requires trigger locks/integrated mechanical safety devices on all handguns sold by licensed dealers manufactured after Jan. 1, 2003. Maryland also maintains a roster of approved locking devices (“Approved Integrated Mechanical Safety Devices”) issued by the state Handgun Roster Board.



Massachusetts	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>	Yes	Handguns and assault/modern sporting rifle only	Handguns and assault/modern sporting rifle only	Yes	<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child “may” or “is likely to” gain access to the firearm, regardless of whether the child uses the firearm or causes injury or whether the firearm is loaded. (Note: Massachusetts law also requires that all firearms be stored with locking devices in place.)</p> <p><b>Locking Devices and Standards:</b> Any handgun or assault/modern sporting rifle sold without a safety device is considered to be defective under state law, and the sale of such weapons constitutes a breach of warranty and an unfair/deceptive trade act or practice. All safety/locking devices in Massachusetts must be approved by the Colonel of the Department of State Police.</p>
Michigan	No		Yes			<p><b>Locking Devices:</b> Licensed dealers are prohibited from selling firearms without trigger locks or gun cases or other storage containers.</p>
Minnesota	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child “may” or “is likely to” gain access to the firearm, regardless of whether the child uses the firearm or causes injury</p>
Mississippi	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (handguns only).</p>
Missouri	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors; applies to all firearms (loaded or unloaded).</p>
Nevada	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<p><b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child “may” or “is likely to” gain access to the firearm, regardless of whether the child uses the firearm or causes injury or whether the firearm is loaded. (Note: Criminal liability is conditioned on the negligent storage of a firearm. Parents/guardians can also be held civilly liable for damages caused by minors who gain access to firearms.)</p>

New Hampshire	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage
New Jersey	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>		Handguns only	Handguns only		<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access as a result of negligent storage of a firearm.  <b>Locking Devices:</b> New Jersey requires trigger locks on all handguns sold in the state, including private sales. The state also prohibits delivery of a handgun to an individual unless it includes a trigger lock or locked gun case, gun box, container, or other secure device.
New York	No	Sometimes	Yes		Yes	<b>Firearms Must Be Kept Locked (Sometimes):</b> New York requires firearm owners to keep their firearm locked if they live with individuals who are ineligible to possess firearms, including a convicted felon, domestic abuser, or a person with a federally prohibitive mental health history.  <b>Locking Devices and Standards:</b> New York State Police have promulgated standards for locking devices, including that the device must: 1) open only by a numeric combination, key, magnetic key, or electronic key; and 2) be constructed with quality of workmanship and material that it may not be pried open easily, removed, or otherwise access through “common household tools.”
North Carolina	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage
Ohio	No		Offer only			<b>Locking Devices:</b> Ohio requires that dealers offer to sell a purchaser a trigger lock, gun lock, or gun locking device appropriate for that firearm at the time of purchase/sale.

Oklahoma	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors; applies to all firearms (loaded or unloaded).
Pennsylvania	No		Handguns only			<b>Locking Devices (Handguns Only):</b> Pennsylvania requires locking devices on all handguns sold by licensed dealers. “Locking device” defined as either 1) a device that, when installed on a firearm, is designed to prevent the firearm from being operated without first deactivating the device; or 2) a device that is incorporated into the design of a firearm and designed to prevent the operation of the firearm by anyone not having access to the device.
Rhode Island	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;16</i>		Handguns only			<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage.  <b>Locking Devices (Handguns Only):</b> Rhode Island requires trigger locks or other safety devices provided with all handguns sold by licensed dealers.
Tennessee	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (handguns only).
Texas	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;17</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access as a result of negligent storage of a firearm
Utah	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors; applies to all firearms (loaded or unloaded).
Virginia	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;14</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (loaded firearms only).
Washington	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;18</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Criminal liability when a child gains access and uses/carries the firearm as a result of negligent storage

Wisconsin	Yes <i>Minor = &lt;14</i>					<b>CAP Law:</b> Prohibits intentional, knowing, or reckless provision of firearms to minors (loaded firearms only).
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## **APPENDIX J: Written Statements from Special Council Members**

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### **Written Statement from Charles H. Ramsey, Special Advisor to the Governor:**

Dear Governor Wolf:

Thank you for the chance to serve as your Special Advisor, and for your efforts to address the critical issue of gun violence in our Commonwealth. While I support all the recommendations presented in this report, I feel that some areas did not go far enough or were not addressed.

This issue is personal to me. In my 50 years in law enforcement, I have seen firsthand the cost of gun violence. And like many of my fellow Pennsylvanians, I am frustrated at the chronic lack of action from political leaders in both Washington D.C. and Harrisburg. That's why I was so proud to watch you sign an Executive Order that takes the politics out of gun violence and calls it what it is: a public health crisis.

This isn't complicated. There are commonsense steps to take that can make Pennsylvania's homes, streets, and communities safer. For example, we know that universal background checks prevent people who shouldn't have guns from buying them and reduce the number of guns entering the criminal market. Pennsylvania's background check system is recognized nationally as a model; we should be using this tool to ensure that all sales and transfers of firearms – whether rifles or handguns, in-person or online – go through this process by closing loopholes in current state law.

At nearly every meeting or public hearing, members of the Special Council heard from gun rights and gun control advocates alike about the importance of training and education for preventing firearm-related injury and death. I believe mandatory training for inexperienced people purchasing firearms should be instituted to make sure that anyone who carries a gun in this Commonwealth understands the law and knows how to use it and store it safely. And recognizing that nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvania's firearm-related deaths are suicides, we should require that all gun sales include information about how to recognize the signs and seek help if they or a loved one is struggling.

And while Pennsylvania has made important progress through landmark legislation like Act 79 of 2018, we can do more to protect victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence. We need to increase resources to support more local communities and the Pennsylvania State Police in adopting the life-saving Lethality Assessment Program, or LAP, which uses law enforcement calls to connect domestic violence and intimate partner violence victims immediately with support and care.

We should also do everything in our power to get weapons of war off our streets by calling for a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Research suggests these guns are used disproportionately in mass shootings and in murders of law enforcement officers, and that they can inflict significantly higher casualty counts when compared with handguns and more traditional rifles. And knowing the rise in the number of "ghost guns" in our communities and the dangers they pose, we should also institute a wholesale ban on these devices as well.

And finally, underscoring all of these recommendations is a need for significant and sustained investments in the fundamentals – violence prevention, community building, victim services, healthcare systems, law enforcement, and education and economic development.

The only thing standing in the way of taking these necessary actions is the limitations of our political will. I remain hopeful that leaders from all parties and backgrounds can finally come together to make the changes necessary to save lives. Anything less would be a moral failing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles H. Ramsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Charles H. Ramsey

**Written Statement from Senator Jake Corman, Senate Majority Leader:**

The Special Council on Gun Violence and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) have done a commendable job in organizing and facilitating a large scale discussion and study on gun violence in Pennsylvania. The Special Council has brought together many viewpoints who have shared their time and perspectives, and their efforts should all be lauded. Most of the findings, recommendations and action steps presented in the Report to the Governor touch on and expressly deal with issues involved in the legislative process, including funding decisions that are currently being discussed in the General Assembly. Due to the legislative nature of many of the findings, recommendations and action steps, I have abstained from voting on the conclusions of the Report. I would like to thank the Council and the Governor for providing me the opportunity to review and participate in this effort.

**Eric R. Nelson, Member**

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House of Representatives  
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Aging & Older Adult Services  
Consumer Affairs  
House Government Oversight  
Human Services  
Insurance  
Labor & Industry  
Policy, Deputy Chair

**Caucus:**

Gas & Oil, Chair

**Minority Report of Rep. Eric Nelson, 57<sup>th</sup> Legislative District**  
**Member, Special Council on Gun Violence**

This Minority Report seeks to offer additional information concerning:

- recent legislative efforts related to gun violence, and
- recent trends in violent firearm offenses.

It further serves to illuminate those instances where I am in agreement with the *Report of Findings, Recommendations and Action Steps (Report)* and elucidate those instances where I may differ.

**A Word About Process**

As a preliminary matter, the Special Council on Gun Violence (Council) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are worthy of praise for the time and effort expended throughout the process leading to the *Report*. By seeking input from a diverse group of Members and participants, the Council and PCCD strove to ensure a balanced work product.

I know that I represented a perspective which was different than many of the other Council members. Regardless, our exploration of these issues was always highlighted by respectful conversations. Even in those instances where we disagreed, the interaction was always professional.

**Information on Current Firearm Laws and Recently Enacted Legislation**

Pennsylvania has a comprehensive set of gun laws and regulations that were established under the Uniform Firearms Act approved during the Special Session on Crime in 1995. The act made sweeping changes to the existing laws of the Commonwealth relating to firearms.

More recently, the General Assembly has passed legislation which addressed the criminal misuse of firearms while protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners. This includes the following bills which were signed into law:



- House Bill 2060 (**Act 79 of 2018**), protected victims of domestic violence and ensured consistency regarding relinquishment of firearms due to a domestic violence conviction or judge's order.
- House Bill 1496 (**Act 134 of 2016**), increased the criminal penalties for certain felons<sup>1</sup> in possession of a firearm.
- House Bill 80 (**Act 192 of 2014**) provided remedies for unlawful regulation of firearms and required timely transmission of mental health records concerning individuals who should not possess a firearm. This was overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after a lawsuit concerning the legislative procedure during the enactment process.
- House Bill 898 (**Act 199 of 2012**) added a provision to the Uniform Firearms Act to stiffen penalties for the illegal sale or transfer of firearms.
- House Bill 40 (**Act 10 of 2011**), our "Castle Doctrine" law, also amended the Uniform Firearms Act by increasing the grading for theft by receiving stolen property if the property is a firearm.
- House Bill 1845 (**Act 131 of 2008**) enacted a series of reasonable reforms, such as programs to stop straw purchasers, increased penalties for possessing a firearm with an altered serial number, stiffer penalties for lying on the federal paperwork to buy a gun, and increasing penalties for false reports of a stolen gun. It also created an expedited process to obtain a temporary emergency license to carry firearms and protected against unlawful seizure of firearms during an emergency.

### **Gun Violence Trends**

Gun violence is a serious problem affecting communities throughout the Commonwealth. Recent trends in the rate of violent firearm offenses, however, have demonstrated significant improvement.

- Based on Pennsylvania State Police records in 2006, there were 15,209 violent firearm offenses (homicide, robbery and aggravated assault involving firearms) in 2006.<sup>2</sup> In that same year, 415,075 firearms<sup>3</sup> were sold to law-abiding Pennsylvanians by or through licensed gun dealers.
- Since then, the efforts of our Commonwealth's law enforcement officers, as well as legislative enactments to address gun violence, have made a real impact.
- By 2018, violent firearm offenses had experienced a 38.5% reduction, dropping to 9,357.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, annual sales of firearms to law-abiding Pennsylvanians essentially doubled. In 2016, the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (the background check system for firearm purchases

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<sup>1</sup> Including second and subsequent convictions as a felon illegally in possession of a gun.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report 2006*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B of *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report 2006*.

<sup>4</sup> See *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report 2018*, p. 7.

used by gun dealers) logged the sale or transfer of 846,197 firearms by gun dealers.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, the Pennsylvania Instant Check System logged the sale or transfer of 756,550 firearms by gun dealers.<sup>6</sup>

The table below is compiled from the various annual editions of the *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report* and reflects violent firearm offenses as tracked in those documents. While the firearm murder rate has fluctuated up-and-down, the overall rate of violent firearm offenses has improved significantly.

Number of Reported Gun Violence Offenses in Pennsylvania - 2006-2018

Offenses by Firearm	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Homicide	553	528	506	456	633	595	657	579	545	609	580	637	595
Robbery	8,760	8,173	7,868	7,223	6,626	6,855	6,526	6,011	5,577	5,398	5,182	4,844	3,930
Agg. Assault	5,896	5,521	5,440	4,914	5,035	5,060	4,997	4,691	4,346	4,691	4,870	4,746	4,832
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,209</b>	<b>14,222</b>	<b>13,814</b>	<b>12,593</b>	<b>12,294</b>	<b>12,510</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>11,281</b>	<b>10,468</b>	<b>10,698</b>	<b>10,632</b>	<b>10,277</b>	<b>9,357</b>

### Gaps

Throughout the Council process, the term “Gaps” was used to identify content areas which were not present in the then-extant version of the *Report*. The following “Gaps” were discussed at the last meeting of the Council for possible incorporation in the final *Report*:

- The need to study and collect data concerning defensive uses of firearms, including circumstances where the presence of a firearm ended criminal activity without the necessity of firing a shot. As explained in a 2018 article on Forbes.com:<sup>7</sup>

[A] 2013 study ordered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and conducted by The National Academies’ Institute of Medicine and National Research Council reported that, “Defensive use of guns by crime victims is a common occurrence”:

Almost all national survey estimates indicate that defensive gun uses by victims are at least as common as offensive uses by criminals, with estimates of annual uses ranging from about 500,000 to more than 3 million, in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C of *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report 2016*.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C of *Pennsylvania State Police Firearms Annual Report 2018*.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulhsieh/2018/04/30/that-time-the-cdc-asked-about-defensive-gun-uses/#3b131ea9299a>.

This would likely require adoption of new methodologies to acquire the data.

- Reconsideration of old, and new, options to remove particularly disruptive students from schools, e.g., Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY). In response to relevant court decisions, the Pennsylvania Department of Education should complete the redesign of AEDY rather than functionally abandon it. This would allow the students removed to receive additional services to address their behavior while preserving the educational rights of those students who remain.
- The tracking of efforts by institutions of higher education which receive Commonwealth funds to actively engage with the communities that surround them in order to address suicide and criminal violence. In particular, those entities which receive non-preferred appropriations should be, in addition to conducting academic studies about criminal violence, required to devolve financial resources and time to community groups who are the “boots on the ground” in these neighborhoods.

To the extent these have been included in the final *Report*, their discussion in this Minority Report may be redundant.

### **Action Steps in the Report**

The last version of the draft *Report* contained 34 enumerated recommendations followed by action steps. It is in those action steps where the aspirational recommendations receive their marching orders.

The following columns are organized by recommendation number and contain both the contents of the action steps associated with a recommendation number and my “vote” on those action steps. Due to the organizational structure of the recommendations, with some including multiple action steps, there are times that my “vote” is reflective of only one action step. Those “votes” can be described as follows:

- In many cases, I agreed with those action steps and those will be indicated by “support.”
- In other instances, often due to as-yet-undefined fiscal impacts or ideas that need additional vetting through larger policy discussions, I chose to “abstain.”
- Finally, there are action steps which I believe constitutionally infringe on the rights of law-abiding Pennsylvanians in a manner that I cannot support. In those instances, I voted “no.”

#### 1. Support.

- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should develop a multi-year stakeholder engagement strategy that identifies and connects with key systems and individuals working to prevent gun violence in the Commonwealth.
- **Action Step:** PCCD should continue to promote and model collaborative practices at the state level by working with cross-agency partners to identify promising practices, common needs, and available resources.

#### 2. Support.

- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Increase funding for existing evidence-based prevention programs focused on youth, families and communities supported through PCCD's VDPP initiative in partnership with the Pennsylvania State University's EPISCenter.

### 3. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Promote career pathways and employment opportunities for at-risk and system-involved youth and adults, including access to postsecondary education and training, as well as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

### 4. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should support programs provided in partnership with local law enforcement, gun shops and ranges, and community groups that promote safer firearm handling and storage practices, including development and dissemination of culturally competent and trauma-informed resources and materials that reflect diverse audiences and settings.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should explore minimum standards, 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 key issues.
- **Action Step:** Encourage the development of an online repository of available resources related to safer storage and handling of firearms, such as certified/accredited firearm safety training instructors, safety education programs, and other information.

### 5. No.

- **Action Step:** The Joint State Government Commission or a similar body should review and analyze current firearm purchasing, licensing, and permitting requirements enacted in other states, including exceptions, to determine impacts of implementing enhanced minimum firearm purchasing or concealed carry application requirements.

### 6. Support.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should develop and launch a comprehensive public messaging and information campaign that helps Pennsylvanians recognize risks, adopt practices for safer storage and handling of firearms, and take other steps to prevent and reduce gun violence.
- **Action Step:** Work with stakeholders from target audiences to create communication tools that can be easily disseminated through social media and other mass media platforms.

### 7. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** Allocate more resources for evidence-informed suicide prevention programs as well as mental health and counseling services, especially for youth and veterans.
- **Action Step:** Develop mechanisms to promote the selection of high-quality suicide prevention trainers and training organizations by schools and other organizations.
- **Action Step:** Use the nationally recognized “Gun Shop Project” model<sup>1</sup> 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.

### 8. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** Provide funding to support voluntary adoption of the LAP model by state and local law enforcement agencies, including grants for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) LAP training as well as the purchase of cell phones and related expenditures.
- **Action Step:** PCCD, in collaboration with PCADV and other stakeholders, should explore the mobile LAP app and protocols developed in Pittsburgh to determine whether additional funding could support development and deployment of a similar tool statewide.

### 9. Support.

- **Action Step:** Increase the number and availability of PFA attorneys and free legal services in communities across Pennsylvania.
- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Create a framework to identify, test, and replicate evidence-informed domestic violence and intimate partner violence programming innovations being implemented in other states.

### 10. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should work with PCADV and other key stakeholders to examine use of criminal definitions of “domestic violence” in other states, including whether the laws have benefits, such as promoting more consistent sentencing of incidents, or unintended consequences, such as dual arrests.

### 11. Support.

- **Action Step:** The 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.
- **Action Step:** The Administration should also collaborate with local law enforcement agencies as well as media organizations and professionals to provide outreach, training, and education to inform safer reporting practices.

### 12. No.

- **Action Item:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should convene key stakeholders, including licensed firearm dealers, gun owners, and law enforcement to identify potential strategies to increase confidence in safety and legality of online gun sales and purchases.
- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should also explore potential amendments to Pennsylvania’s Uniform Firearms Act that would require the completion of a background checks for private sales and transfers of long guns to unlicensed buyers.

### 13. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** The Governor/Administration should continue to communicate support for reauthorization of the federal Violence Against Women Act and proposed provisions that would prohibit purchase of firearms by current and former dating partners convicted of abuse or stalking to Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegation.
- **Action Step:** In addition to advocating for reforms at the federal level, the Victim Services Advisory Committee 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.

### 14. Support.

- **Action Item:** State agencies, including the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania State Police, should work in consultation with key stakeholders to develop recommendations for legislative amendments providing for immediate (upon commitment) electronic reporting to law enforcement.
- **Action Item:** If legislative changes are made, the Commonwealth should support local implementation by providing training for relevant professionals and organizations, as well as promoting public awareness through education campaigns and stakeholder engagement.

### 15. Support.

- **Action Step:** Address the biggest barriers to safe firearm storage, such as cost, ease of use, training and education, etc., by supporting gunlock giveaways, offsetting costs of gun storage devices (through funding or tax credits) and promoting firearm safety training.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should research and recommend alternatives to reduce the cost of safe gun storage and should provide information on effective gun storage strategies for different types of firearms.

### 16. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** The Joint State Government Commission or similar body should provide a review of enacted laws in other states focused on safe handling and or storage of firearms, including CAP laws, and present analysis on implementation steps, outcomes, costs, and other relevant information to the General Assembly.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should convene a workgroup to review the Joint State Government Commission’s findings and recommend specific safe firearm storage practices for action by the General Assembly with input from all key stakeholder groups, including addressing potential enforcement provisions (range of sanctions) as well as potential exceptions.

<sup>1</sup> *Gun Shop Project*. Harvard University School of Public Health, Messia Matter, access January 18, 2020.

17. No.

- **Action Step:** The General Assembly should work with key stakeholder groups, including state and local law enforcement, gun owners and dealers, to develop legislation requiring reporting of lost or stolen firearms that includes amnesty/immunity provisions for individuals who comply with the law.

18. No.

- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** Develop and expand temporary and voluntary and safe off-site surrender and/or storage of firearms.

19. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should support the development and dissemination of Act 79 implementation plans which identify best practices for county-specific protocols and procedures, gaps, community resources, and coordination mechanisms.
- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should analyze available data at the state level and should support the development of local data collection processes to monitor implementation progress and outcomes while being mindful of confidentiality and privacy requirements.

20. Support.

- **Action Step:** Building on momentum in Pennsylvania and other states, the Commonwealth should become a "Trauma-Informed State," either through legislation or executive action, which would establish a common language and understanding of trauma and identify specific actions at the state level.
- **Action Step:** Continue to support school-based trauma-informed efforts to identify needs and address gaps related to providing appropriate early interventions with children and youth, and explore promising practices like "Handle With Care."
- **Action Step:** Ensure that any training, drills, or preparation of students in schools and other settings that include youth and other vulnerable populations are developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed.
- **Action Step:** Provide training and learning opportunities for individuals and organizations in recognition of trauma and healing centered approaches.

21. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** Enhance capacity of county-based mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services to take on increased demands for services and supports by restoring base funding for counties and significantly increasing and sustaining federal and state investments in these critical supports.
- **Action Step:** Expand rural access to mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other healthcare services, including expanding use of technology such as telepsychiatry and telemedicine.

22. Support.

- **Action Step:** Expand access to mental health treatment and supports for professionals called to respond to incidents of gun violence.
- **Action Step:** Build resiliency and wellness by reducing stigma related to mental health in the first responder community by promoting adoption of best practices, including information about expected immediate or long-term reactions to secondary or vicarious trauma.
- **Action Step:** Increase access to peer-to-peer support models, especially for smaller agencies in rural communities.
- **Action Step:** Review resources developed in response to the federal Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness (LEMHWW) Program Resources, U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office, accessed January 22, 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness (LEMHWW) Program Resources, U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office, accessed January 22, 2020.

23. Support.

- **Action Step:** Explore potential amendments to the Mental Health Procedures Act 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).
- **Action Step:** If legislative changes are adopted, support local implementation by conducting stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, as well as provide training for relevant agencies.

24. Support.

- **Action Step:** Identify best practices and models to provide additional training for professionals in public safety, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems on strategies to improve relationships with communities, including those addressing implicit bias, trauma, crises response, de-escalation techniques, and other issues.
- **Action Step:** PCCD should continue to promote and develop programs, frameworks, resources and lessons learned from successful grant-funded initiatives that should be replicated in Pennsylvania.
- **Action Step:** The Office of Gun Violence Prevention should work with others to create spaces for state and local policymakers to hear directly from communities and key stakeholders about what strategies are working well, where challenges remain, and what is needed to improve relationships.

25. Support.

- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should establish an interagency workgroup comprised of state and local stakeholders to analyze available data and research to recommend effective strategies to reduce availability of illegal guns and prevent firearm-related crime (including gun buyback programs, preventing straw purchases, addressing "ghost guns," and other issues).

26. Support.

- **Action Step:** PSP should work with the ATF and FBI, as well as local law enforcement, to identify and implement strategies to improve the number of unsolved homicides through a joint task force or similar model. The joint task force should identify current practice in the field, including potential barriers and available data.
- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should also explore strategies to increase utilization of eTrace and PICS for confiscated firearms by local law enforcement.
- **Action Steps:** PCCD should continue to promote community-based reporting and efforts to strengthen relationships between communities and law enforcement, as well as reduce forensic evidence backlogs at laboratories across the Commonwealth.

27. Support.

- **Action Step:** PCCD should work with key stakeholders to develop strategies to connect individuals being released from prison to community support systems that include counseling on compliance with parole requirements restricting access to firearms.

28. Support.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should work with relevant stakeholders to identify strategies to address resource gaps for grassroots violence prevention efforts, such as expanding voluntary payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements and/or requiring academic research institutions to provide funding and/or research support as part of their non-profit/tax-exempt status.
- **Action Step:** PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention should support community-led programs that address community gun violence through funding, technical assistance, and research/evaluation, and should explore the possibility of multi-year grants for communities most impacted by gun violence to promote sustainability.
- **Action Step:** 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 capacity and coalition building, peer support, sharing best practices, and helping inform work/decisions of state leaders.
- **Action Step:** Support community-led investments in low-cost blight reduction and measure impacts on gun violence reduction.

### 29. Support.

- **Action Step:** The Commonwealth should support local efforts to implement and sustain safe routes, particularly in “hot spot” areas.
- **Action Step:** The Pennsylvania Department of Education should work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and PCCD to disseminate and promote safe school transportation alternatives for students in areas with high rates of gun violence.

### 30. Support.

- **Action Step:** Provide training and technical assistance to healthcare providers and first responders to increase utilization of evidence-informed strategies to promote lethal means reduction and how to talk with survivors/victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence about access to firearms as part of discussions about risk and safety.
- **Action Step:** Increase the number of law enforcement officers, justice practitioners, and allied professionals participating in initial and ongoing high-quality professional education opportunities on how to identify domestic violence and intimate partner violence cases, understanding dynamics of power and control, and interacting with victims/survivors.
- **Action Step:** Expand use of models that improve interactions by law enforcement, justice practitioners, and allied professionals with people in crisis and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Action Step:** Promote training on reduction of force techniques for law enforcement, particularly in cases involving a firearm or “suicide by cop” attempts.

### 31. Support.

- **Action Step:** Encourage the establishment of multidisciplinary threat assessment teams in settings beyond education, including offering relevant training for licensed healthcare professionals, law enforcement officers, human resource (HR) directors, and other professionals.
- **Action Step:** 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).
- Increase awareness and utilization of available tip-lines for reporting concerning behavior, such as Safe2Say Something (schools) and the “See Something, Send Something” Program (general public).

### 32. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** Expand availability of free safety and security assessments through the Pennsylvania State Police Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) program.
- **Action Step:** Adopt legislative amendments to include mass shootings and targeted violence/mass casualty incidents in emergency management plans for congregate care settings, such as education institutions and healthcare facilities.
- **Action Step:** Provide technical assistance and other supports to communities that facilitate more centralized and coordinated services for individuals affected by mass shootings, targeted violence, and other incidents.

### 33. Support.

- **Action Step:** Support development of post-discharge protocols in hospitals, emergency departments, and other healthcare settings that improve access to services and transition plans for individuals who have experienced firearm related injuries, including attempted suicide by firearms.
- **Action Step:** Improve coordination of care for individuals who have experienced firearm-related injuries using a healing-centered approach.

### 34. Abstain.

- **Action Step:** Promote streamlined data sharing and analyses between state and local law enforcement agencies, coroners/medical examiners (CMEs), courts, state agencies, and other organizations (i.e., research, policy, advocacy) to aid in establishing baseline data and determining impact of policies and practices, including firearm safety training, safe storage practices, education and awareness campaigns, etc.
- **Action Step:** Promote more consistent reporting mechanisms and procedures for law enforcement related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence (i.e., officer records and reports).
- **Action Step:** 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.
- **Action Step:** PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention should focus its early efforts on establishing baseline rates using available datasets to conduct basic/descriptive research, especially related to the costs of fatal and nonfatal injuries and crimes related to firearms and should make findings available on its website. State agencies should provide relevant aggregate data and findings from programs like Child Welfare Checks, PA VDRS, Child Death and Suicide Death Reviews, and crime data collected through UCR and NIBRS to support these efforts.
- **Action Step:** Reinstate Domestic Violence Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews in every county in Pennsylvania.
- **Action Step:** 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.

## Conclusion

Over the course of the Council process, I learned a significant amount about the challenges which face our Commonwealth’s citizens as they combat gun violence. I gained great insight from both participants in the process and my colleagues on the Council. In turn, I hope that I was able to provide them with information of value. I submit this Minority Report with the greatest respect for the work of the Council in its creation of the *Report of Findings, Recommendations and Action Steps*.

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- <sup>1</sup> [Report of Initial Findings & Workgroup Recommendations](#), Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), January 22, 2020.
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