

**To: Governor Brian Kemp**

**From: Kayla Tull**

**Date: July 2, 2024**

**Subject: Policy memo regarding gun control legislation to reduce gun-related deaths while upholding Second Amendment Rights**

### **Executive Summary**

This memo provides a comprehensive analysis of how gun control legislation can be effectively implemented to reduce gun-related deaths with respect to the Second Amendment. Historically, the United States has seen a recent dramatic increase in mass shootings and gun-related deaths, with active shooter events increasing by 50% from 2020-2021 and 97% since 2017. Gun ownership is especially high in southern states such as our own. This policy memo serves as a foundation for a bipartisan gun legislative decision that can only be done with your help. Please consider the following contents as evidence for identifying policies that could balance public safety with constitutional rights.

### **Background**

Gun violence remains a significant concern in the United States and Georgia. Efforts to address this issue through legislation often face challenges due to the constitutional protections provided by the Second Amendment. To understand what is causing this increase in active shootings, we must identify possible causes.

1. Increased gun ownership
  - a. Gun Ownership has increased by over 65% since the year 2020
2. Increased gun availability

- a. U.S. gun manufacturing has increased by ~10% each year, with close to 13.4 mil being manufactured in 2022
- 3. Weakening gun laws
  - a. Many states have opted to eliminate carry permits and follow less strict screening processes
    - i. The Georgia Constitutional Carry Act passed in 2022, allows “lawful” gun owners to carry a concealed weapon in most public places without getting a weapons carry license from the state
- 4. Exposure to violence
  - a. In a study done by UC Davis, researchers found that among those exposed to violence, 1 in 3 said they were now considering owning a gun
- 5. Socioeconomic factors
  - a. Housing instability, poverty, poor education, unemployment, and lack of health care have all been associated with an increase in gun violence
- 6. Social and political climate
  - a. Distrust of law enforcement, growing political party separation, and social media have also been found to be associated with gun violence

### **Policy Options and Analysis**

The following policies build on previously enacted or bipartisan-supported bills. The goal is to provide a solution that both parties can agree on.

1. Implement sensible or common sense gun laws: banning assault weapons

- a. Previous bill: The 10-year ban was passed by the U.S. Congress on August 25, 1994, and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on September 13, 1994. The ban applied only to weapons manufactured after the date of the ban's enactment. It expired on September 13, 2004, following its sunset provision.
  - b. An assault ban would still allow for non-automatic weapons to be sold and owned. Banning the use of assault weapons for civilians could potentially save thousands and reduce the amount of active shooter events.
2. Implement Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs): allow family members and law enforcement to petition a court for the temporary removal of guns from people who are at a high risk of committing violence
  - a. Many active shooters have a history of mental illness or family members that were concerned. Allowing family members to petition the court for temporary removal of guns, not just for the safety of others but of the owner itself would dramatically decrease the number of suicide and active shootings.
3. Allocation of more money toward expanding community gun safety education, intervention programs, and research by the state of Georgia
  - a. Public health campaigns
    - i. Schools, communities, etc.
  - b. Gun Safety education courses
4. Expansion of mental health care
  - a. Expand funding for mental health care
  - b. Integrate mental health services into primary care
  - c. Improve insurance mental health coverage

**Recommendation:**

My recommendation to you, Governor Kemp, would be policy no. 3. The remaining three options are still important and will require your future support and campaigning on a national level if you choose to do so. However, policy 3 could be implemented rather quickly, is cost-effective, and could yield high results toward our goal of decreasing active shooter events. Please see the following table as further evidence as to why I recommend policy no.3:

	<b>Policy 1</b>	<b>Policy 2</b>	<b>Policy 3</b>	<b>Policy 4</b>
<b>Cost</b>	high	high	low	high
<b>Effectiveness</b>	medium-high	high	medium-high	medium
<b>Administrative Ease</b>	low	low	high	medium

### Sources:

1. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/active-shooter-incidents-increased-50-percent-2021-new-fbi-data-shows-rcna30148>
2. <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/root-causes-of-gun-violence/>
3. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-bipartisan-safer-communities-act-1-year-later/>
4. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-12/dec-2023-cgvs-defending-democracy.pdf>
5. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/state-laws/concealed-carry-in-georgia/#:~:text=Effective%20April%2012%2C%202022%2C%20Georgia,background%20check%20or%20permit%20required.>