

Resolution on Extreme Risk Protection Orders

WHEREAS gun violence, including homicides and suicides, claims the lives of more than 30,000 Americans each year, and more Americans have been killed by guns in the last 48 years than in all U.S. wars combined;

WHEREAS people with a history of violence, people who threaten and abuse their partners and children, and people experiencing a dangerous mental health crisis, should not have easy access to firearms as a public safety measure;

WHEREAS virtually without exception, individuals who act out with a gun, either against others or themselves, exhibit signs that alert family or community members to the potential for violence;

WHEREAS under current Washington State law, an individual must be involuntarily committed (mentally adjudicated) for 14 consecutive days before they are restricted from buying firearms;

WHEREAS people with serious mental or emotional issues, who encounter the involuntary treatment system pose an elevated risk for violence toward themselves or others;

WHEREAS the vast majority of mass shooters and individuals who commit suicide show signs of their intentions, but our law renders families, often the first to see those signs, unable to take action to restrict, even on a temporary basis, their access to firearms;

WHEREAS Initiative 1491 (I-1491), “Court Ordered Extreme Risk Protection Orders Temporarily Preventing Access to Firearms,” is a Washington State initiative to allow family members and law enforcement to ask a judge to temporarily suspend a person’s access to firearms, if there is documented evidence that the person poses a serious threat to themselves or others;

WHEREAS anyone seeking an extreme risk protection order will be required to present sworn evidence in a court of law, and those found to have knowingly filed a false petition will be subject to criminal penalties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Benton County Democrats declare our strong support for I-1491 and when passed, call upon the Washington State legislature to support the initiated statute through appropriate fiscal and staffing measures.

Submitted by Richard Badalamente on April 28, 2016 to the Benton County Democrats.