

A COMMON AGENDA TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE: Lobbying For A Safer Pennsylvania

Gun violence claims the lives of approximately 1,600 Pennsylvanians per year, and it has not let up, even during this pandemic. Everyone deserves to live in a safe Pennsylvania. On March 23rd, you'll gather with hundreds of other Pennsylvanians to advocate for a Common Agenda for Gun Safety, policies that are supported by Pennsylvanians of all ideologies, occupations, and race. Extreme Risk Protection orders will reduce suicide. Lost & stolen reporting will address illegal firearms used in many shootings. And, Universal Background Checks will help ensure people intending to harm others can't access a rifle.

Inside the packet you'll find everything you need for March 23 Virtual Advocacy Day. If you have any questions, join the day of "Green Room" to ask questions of one of CeaseFirePA's staff or volunteers. See the schedule for more details.

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Getting through the Day

Schedule

If you have questions about next steps or where to go, check in at the [Virtual Advocacy Day Center](#). It will be open from 8 AM-12 PM and then reopen after the noon rally from 1:30 PM to 4 PM. This is also where to go if you have questions about meetings, policy solutions, or to find the educational sessions in the afternoon.

9 AM-4 PM:	Individual Advocacy Meetings with your Legislators
12:30-1:30 PM:	Virtual Rally with Governor Wolf and Common Agenda Leaders
2 PM-2:30 PM:	Discussing a Public Health Crisis Led by Dr. Zoe Maher and Dr. Uma Raman
3 PM-3:30 PM:	Engaging Gun Owners on Gun Safety with Veterans from Action Tank
3:30 PM-4 PM	Community-Based Violence Prevention Solutions with Giffords & EMIR

Contact Info

Many CeaseFirePA staff will be in legislative meetings throughout the day. We recommend first going to the Virtual Advocacy Day Center to ask questions. If you need to reach someone about a particular meeting or it is urgent, you can find key staff members for CeaseFirePA:

- Max Milkman, Lead Organizer, 215-870-5733 or email max.milkman@ceasefirepa.org
- Christian Soltysiak, Director of Strategic Operations and People, christian.soltysiak@ceasefirepa.org
- Adam Garber, Executive Director, (267) 515-1220, adam.garber@ceasefirepa.org
- Josh Fleitman, Western PA Manager, (703) 939-7552, josh.fleitman@ceasefirepa.org
- Kallel Edwards, Philadelphia Organizer, (484) 773-6360, kallel.edwards@ceasefirepa.org
- John-Michael Pickens-Contignola, Central PA Organizer, (717) 829-5942, john.michael@ceasefirepa.org
- Frances Patano, Communications Manager, (626) 825-7472 , Frances.Patano@ceasefirepa.org

Legislative Meetings

As a citizen advocate your role is to help legislators understand the importance of tackling gun violence to the community and why some of the solutions we're discussing are critical to saving lives. We have provided core information about how to do this and the issues under discussion, but will also have a policy expert in each meeting to help if more difficult questions are asked.

Finding My Meeting

You should receive an email prior to your March 23rd meeting about the timing for your legislative meetings. However, if you cannot find it or are having trouble accessing it, you can visit the main advocacy day virtual room to discover where to go.

What to do if your meeting isn't scheduled

We will be unable to schedule every meeting, despite numerous attempts. This could have been for a variety of reasons including the busy schedule on a legislative session day or legislators failing to respond, or even declining to meet with constituents in rare cases. Since we can't physically drop by their office, we're going to do phone drop bys. Here's how:

1. [Find your Legislators](#): Look up their phone number and appropriate contact info. Most will have staff in the office on a session day.
2. [Call & Ask for the Legislator or Legislative Staffer](#): Introduce yourself, note your calling as part of CeaseFirePA's Gun Safety Advocacy Day and that since a meeting wasn't scheduled you'd like to talk to a staff person or the legislator.
3. Make your case: When you get the right person on the phone, lay out one of the below issues and ask them to act as the below campaign notes indicate.
4. [Report your results](#)

How to Lobby a Legislator

- *Build a Relationship*: Advocacy and politics is about relationships. Take some time to connect on common issues, local connections or who you are. It will help your advocacy be more successful and find unusual opportunities to advocate for solutions.
- *Localize the Problem*: We have provided key context on each policy, but you should put it in your own words. The more you can localize or personalize the issue you are discussing, the better.
- *50/50 Rule*: You want to speak no more than 50% of the time. The best is to ask lots of questions and give the legislator/staff time to engage in discussion.
- *Clear, Direct Ask*: Make your ask direct, specific and short. Then pause and wait for an answer. If you don't get a clear one, keep talking and then come back again before developing a follow-up plan.
- *Be honest*: If you don't know the answer to a question, that is okay. Be honest and get back to them.
- *Have a follow-up plan*: This is the start of our push for a Common Agenda. Have a plan to get more information to them, next steps on pushing these solutions forward and to help them support these policies.

Sample Meeting Agenda (30 minute meeting)

The below agenda is for a 30 minute meeting, but you may only have 15 minutes. Note that the problem/solution/ask section could occur for more than one policy if there is enough time as gun violence needs different solutions based on how it occurs.

- *Introductions (3 minutes)*: Go around the room and introduce yourself including where you live and 1-2 sentences on why you came today to advocate for gun safety solutions. Confirm the length of the meeting.
- *Build Relationship (5 minutes)*: Discuss their priorities, connect on other issues in the committee or common interests.
- *Problem (3-5 minutes)*: Focus on one aspect of the gun violence problem, articulating how it connects to the community, safety or you personally. The goal here is to get the legislator to understand the core problem, why it happens and connect emotionally on the need & urgency for action.
- *Solution (3 minutes)*: You will want to discuss why the proposed policy will help solve the problem.
- *Ask*: Have a clear ask as noted in the target notes. It generally will be to cosponsor the bill OR some ask to build more support by holding a community event, talking to other legislators or some media activity.
- *Listen*: See what information they have, questions about the policy and learn where they are leaning.
- *Follow-up*: Create a clear follow-up plan with the legislator to get additional information and timeline on an answer.

After the meeting, please fill in your notes on our [virtual advocacy day report back form](#).

**Common Agenda to Stop Gun Violence
2021 Virtual Advocacy Day Meeting Worksheet**

Date of Meeting: _____

Legislator: _____

Why did you choose to advocate for stronger gun laws?

How does gun violence impact your community?

What problem do you want to bring to the attention of your legislator?

What action would you like your legislator to take?

Legislator: _____

Legislator Comments		
Background Checks	Extreme Risk Protection Orders	Lost and Stolen Firearm Reporting
Other Notable Legislator Comments		
Legislator Commitments and Any Requests They Made		

Common Agenda Talking Points

Closing the background checks gap on private sales of long guns

[Senate Bill 88](#) - Sponsored by Senator Vincent Hughes

[House Bill 235](#) - Sponsored by Representative Perry Warren

- PROBLEM
 - With nearly 1.5 million legal attempted firearm purchases in Pennsylvania in 2020, we need to ensure that people who should not have guns are kept from getting guns. Background checks are one reliable way to stop bad transactions at the source: the sale.
 - While firearm background checks rose to historic levels in 2020, denials climbed even faster, with more than 25,000 people denied a purchase. And that doesn't include all sales of a top-selling type of firearm excluded from our background check system: private sales of long guns like military-style rifles.
 - Long guns can result in the most carnage when they are deployed. Parkland, Tree of Life, Las Vegas, Aurora, Newtown all involved semi-automatic "military-style" rifles.
- SOLUTION:
 - Despite this, purchasers who buy long guns sold by so-called "private sellers"--people who can reasonably claim they are not in the business of regularly selling firearms--are not required to undergo a background check. This gap needs to be closed.
 - 88% of Pennsylvanians support stronger background checks.
- ASK: You can find the appropriate ask for your legislator by checking with your legislative leader ahead of time or checking on their current stance.
 - Existing Cosponsors: We need you to help us build momentum on this policy. Will you work with us to
 - Host a local event to educate constituents about the importance of background checks?
 - Host a policy
 - Draft an opinion piece with us on this issue?
 - Talk to your colleagues about the importance of this effort?
 - Potential Cosponsors: Will you support universal background checks by cosponsoring Senate Bill 88/House Bill 235?

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)

Senate Bill 134 - Sponsored by Senator Wayne Fontana

House Bill has yet to be introduced

- PROBLEM
 - Nearly 60% of gun deaths are suicides--approximately 900 per year in PA.
 - Family/fellow household members, who are often most likely to notice someone in crisis, can help prevent suicides and stopping potential mass shootings by creating a legal process to *temporarily* remove firearms from that individual's home.
 - Under current law, the only way in which family members can legally remove guns from those in crisis is through involuntary commitment to a mental health facility, and the individuals in question cannot retrieve their guns without a lengthy expungement process.
- SOLUTION
 - Extreme Risk Protection Orders remove firearms for up to one year and prevent the individual from buying new guns after evidence of crisis behaviors linked to violence is convincingly presented to a judge. After the expiration of the order, guns must be returned to their owner as soon as possible.
 - Connecticut and Indiana studies show significant decrease in suicides of 12%-18% after ERPO laws were enacted.
 - None of the subjects showing clear signs that they were about to become mass shooters in California committed a mass shooting after an Extreme Risk Protection Order was issued.
 - [80% of Pennsylvanians](#) support the concept of Extreme Risk Protection Orders.
- ASK: You can find the appropriate ask for your legislator by checking with your legislative leader ahead of time or checking on their current stance.
 - *Existing Cosponsors*: We need you to help us build momentum on this policy. Will you work with us to
 - Host a local event to educate constituents about the importance of Extreme Risk Protection Orders?
 - Draft an opinion piece with us on this issue?
 - Talk to your colleagues about the importance of this effort?
 - *Potential Cosponsors*: Will you support universal background checks by cosponsoring Rep. Stephens legislation on ERPOs/Senate Bill 134?

Lost or Stolen Gun Reporting

Senate Bill 217 - Sponsored by Senator Christine Tartaglione

[House Bill from Rep. Sanchez & Kenyatta](#)

- PROBLEM
 - So many of our communities, including those most vulnerable to gun violence, are flooded with stolen guns and the violence that they bring. Yet under PA law, gun owners are not required to report the loss or theft of a firearm to law enforcement.
 - Between 2006 and 2016, the number of guns being stolen from individuals across the U.S. increased by 60%. A recent study found nearly a third of guns recovered at Pittsburgh crime scenes were said to have been stolen.
 - A report by Attorney General Shapiro found that only 3% were reported lost or stolen, despite it being a common [defense in court](#).
- SOLUTION: A “lost or stolen gun reporting” law requiring gun owners to report the theft or loss of a gun within 72 hours of discovering it missing.
 - encourages responsible gun ownership by holding gun owners accountable.
 - allows law enforcement to staunch the flow of illegal firearms into communities through more effective firearms tracking.
 - Studies reveal these laws reduce illegal firearm trafficking Kahane found reporting laws reduced the [movement of illegal gun movement by 46%](#). And a Webster study found crime guns originating in states with a [lost & stolen law were 30% less likely to end up in another state than guns that came from states without a law](#).
- ASK: You can find the appropriate ask for your legislator by checking with your legislative leader ahead of time or checking on their current stance.
 - Existing Cosponsors: We need you to help us build momentum on this policy. Will you work with us to
 - Host a local event to educate constituents about the importance of mandatory lost and stolen firearm reporting?
 - Draft an opinion piece with us on this issue?
 - Talk to your colleagues about the importance of this effort?
 - Potential Cosponsors: Will you support universal background checks by cosponsoring Senate Bill 217/the House Bill from Sanchez?