

Testimony in Opposition to HB1411

I am writing to oppose HB 1411.

My name is Dr. Chris Tiongson, a pediatrician who has worked in Fargo for over 20 years. I am writing as a private citizen and not in any capacity related to my employers.

Firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children---more than cancer and more than car accidents. As a pediatrician, it is essential that I speak up on the leading cause of death for children. In North Dakota, the majority of gun deaths for people of all ages are from suicide. Extreme Risk Protection Orders which can temporarily remove firearms from a person at risk of harm to self or others after due process, is a proven way to prevent deaths. Suicide attempts using a firearm are lethal 90% of the time. That means that almost all the teens, who in a moment of crisis, attempt suicide with a gun don't get a second chance. An Extreme Risk Protection Law in North Dakota would be primarily a suicide prevention law.

This bill poses several significant concerns:

1. HB 1411 would preemptively tie the hands of future legislatures and remove a proven means of reducing the number of children and adults who die by suicide.
2. Extreme Risk Protection Orders have already been adopted by 21 states and the District of Columbia and have good evidence that supports their effectiveness. In the decade since Indiana passed its Extreme Risk law in 2005, the state's firearm suicide rate decreased by 7.5 percent. Connecticut saw a 14% reduction in the firearm suicide rate.
3. When a person is in crisis and considering harming themselves or others, family members and law enforcement are often the first people to see the warning signs. Extreme Risk laws allow loved ones or law enforcement to intervene by petitioning a court for an order to **temporarily** prevent someone in crisis from accessing guns. Putting time and distance between a person in crisis and lethal means is an essential step in preventing suicide.

I encourage you to recommend DO NOT PASS for HB 1411.

Chris Tiongson, MD