



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

TO: All North Carolina state agencies, departments, boards, commissions, and committees under the control of the North Carolina Office of the Governor
From: Governor Roy Cooper
Date: August 12, 2019
Re: Improving Firearm Safety

Introduction

Firearm safety is a matter of critical importance for North Carolina. This administration has taken positive, substantive steps to promote firearm safety and responsible firearm ownership. However, more work needs to be done, especially given the ramifications if we fail to make good on our progress.

Firearm violence is a scourge on North Carolina communities. On average, firearms kill 1,311 people in North Carolina each year. That number corresponds to about one person every seven hours. In particular, firearm violence endangers vulnerable North Carolina populations. Firearms are the third-leading cause of death for North Carolina children ages one through seventeen. In 2016 and 2017, at least 672 children and teenagers in North Carolina visited a hospital for a firearm related injury. More than sixty percent of firearm deaths in North Carolina are suicides, and nearly fifty-seven percent of all suicide deaths in North Carolina involve firearms. In addition, nearly sixty-one percent of North Carolina's intimate partner homicides involve a firearm, and abused women are five times more likely to be killed if their abuser has a firearm.

The state of affairs is no better on the national level. In the United States, there is one mass shooting resulting in the death or injury of four or more people every day. And it has only gotten worse in recent years. Seven of the ten deadliest mass shootings in American history have occurred in the last ten years. Since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012, there have been 2,180 mass shootings. This year in North Carolina, two students were killed and four were wounded when a shooter opened fire into their classroom on the last day of classes at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

While the situation often feels hopeless, it is a fact that states with stronger firearm safety measures have significantly lower rates of firearm-related deaths. Seven out of the ten states with the most comprehensive firearm safety measures have the lowest incidences of firearm-related

deaths annually. Indeed, states that have repealed their firearm safety policies have seen significant increases in both homicides and suicides.

This administration has an obligation to continue to pursue policies that improve public safety, promote responsible firearm ownership, and ensure the faithful execution of the laws of the state, consistent with Article III of the North Carolina State Constitution.

Therefore, I, Governor Roy Cooper, consistent with the authority vested in the North Carolina Office of the Governor, my cabinet secretaries, and other executive agency directors, hereby direct the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation to take the following actions:

Section 1. Definitions

- a. “National Instant Criminal Background Check System”: Mandated by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993, Pub. L. No 103-159, 107 Stat. 1536, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (“NICS”) enables a Federal Firearms Licensee to immediately verify by telephone or electronic means whether the transfer of a firearm would violate 18 U.S.C. § 922(g), 18 U.S.C. § 922(n), or state law.
- b. “Behavioral Threat Assessment Unit”: An entity created by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (“SBI”) to identify, at the request of a law enforcement agency with original jurisdiction, investigate, evaluate, and mitigate the threat posed by person(s) of concern within North Carolina who there is reason to believe have the motive and means to develop, or act on an opportunity to commit, a targeted attack.

Section 2. State Bureau of Investigation Responsibilities

- a. SBI shall continue to convene a NICS Working Group (“Working Group”) to conduct a reporting gap analysis and regular NICS compliance review. In addition to its ongoing efforts, the Working Group, which is comprised of subject matter experts, shall comprehensively review and analyze the quality of information North Carolina shares with NICS and provide additional support to SBI’s ongoing review and analysis, with the goal of strengthening North Carolina’s processes and submissions to NICS.
- b. SBI Behavioral Threat Assessment Unit shall provide behavioral threat assessment training to as many law enforcement agencies as possible.
- c. To the greatest extent possible, SBI shall increase the number of presentations the North Carolina Information Sharing and Analysis Center gives to businesses and civic groups and help build community awareness of domestic terrorism indicators.

Section 3. Department of Health and Human Services Responsibilities

- a. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”) shall develop a public education campaign that educates firearm owners and prospective owners on the importance of safe firearm storage.
- b. DHHS shall convene a coalition of suicide prevention stakeholders to update recommendations in the state’s Suicide Prevention Plan related to suicides caused by firearms.
- c. DHHS and the Division of Emergency Management within the North Carolina Department of Public Safety shall jointly convene a meeting of relevant state and local partners and stakeholders to develop planning and operational guidelines for establishing Family Assistance and Victim Identification Centers in response to a mass casualty incident.

Section 4. Miscellaneous

- a. This Executive Directive is consistent with and does not otherwise abrogate federal or state law.
- b. This Executive Directive is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by future Executive Directive or Order.



Roy Cooper
Governor

