

How package of gun laws raises red flags in New York state

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BUFFALO, N.Y. — As the fight against gun violence rages on, Gov. Kathy Hochul recently signed a small package of related legislation to red flag laws and manufacturing.

With six bills signed, here's a look at what these laws are and how they could impact the lives of New Yorkers.

The takeaways include requiring dealers and manufacturers to post warnings on their sites about hazards associated, a definition of a "pistol converter," a requirement extreme risk protection orders when issued are tracked in a statewide registry with other protection orders and warrants, whole police agencies as opposed to singular police officers to be listed on ERPOs, credit and debit card issuers must track sales of ammunition and firearms to combat overstock as a potential red flag and a requirement that license issuers provide information for public and personal safety.

The governor and other gun safety advocates argue this is just a step in the right direction.

"A child in America is more likely to be killed by a gun than to die from a disease or malnutrition," Hochul said earlier this week. "Americans are more likely to die from a bullet than in a car accident."

This week, she announced gun violence is down nearly 50% since 2021.

But there are key moments anyone affected by gun violence will never forget.

"Twelve beautiful people shopping at the grocery store 10 minutes from my home," Hochul recalled of the [May 14, 2022 mass shooting](#) at a Buffalo Tops supermarket. "[They were] slaughtered for leaving their homes [and] going to a grocery store. [They were] killed because of the color of their skin. Those are my words, but also the words of the white supremacist who, on his 18th birthday in the southern part of New York, went out and purchased a weapon."

The 5/14 Buffalo massacre struck people at their core not just in Buffalo, but Zeneta Everhart, who's son survived the attack, has lived with that day and used it to advocate since.

"I am not against the Second Amendment," she said. "I think if you want a gun, you should be able to get a gun. But you should be able to get that gun legally."

Everhart has gone on to become a Buffalo City Council member and has continued her advocacy.

The recent package of legislation signed by Hochul is meant to bolster red flag laws.

One bill requires that courts notify the state order of protection and warrants registry whenever an extreme risk protection order is issued. Another allows police agencies instead of individual police officers to be listed as the petitioner in an ERPO proceeding, meant to protect singular officers.

"The petitioner line would go down as the police officer and it would use their government name," New York State Police Investigators Assosiation President Timothy Dymond said. "What we were finding is the members that were doing a lot of the ERPOs and TRPOs were being viewed as overly

litigious in their personal lives so or anything else that will do a search of civil lawsuits that they were involved in, could be 10, 15 or 20 of these suits. By switching to the agency name it takes them off of that quick search of the petitioner line so we're hoping that they have less struggles off duty for things that they have to do on duty."

With perhaps one more thing seen as a potential road block to all that paperwork being out of the way, there's that immediate room for improvement.

Although, it's a big win for those in favor of recent gun safety legislation and tracking of potential dangers.

"We did something that in my heart, I knew if every other state would do, or if we had a national red flag law, we would save tens of thousands of lives in this country," Hochul said. "I know because we've seen that happen here in the state of New York."

"That's where it has to start," Everhart said. "It has to start right here at home. And then we get the attention of the federal government and show them that we are not playing. We want our people safe on our streets."

While progress is being made to keep our communities safe, there are certainly still communities that are struck day in and day out by preventable gun violence.

"It is crucial that, you know, our leaders, our federal government leaders, our state leaders are paying attention to that and paying attention to the needs of the community, because it's it's an everyday battle," she added.

"That's what the Constitution guarantees us, doesn't it? Life," said Hochul. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Rather than worrying about whether your loved ones are going to make it home at the end of a school day or a day at the office."

According to World Population Review, New York has the fourth strictest gun laws across the nation. Massachusetts is ranked fifth, but boasts the lowest gun death rate.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease and cancer are the only two other larger killers, with gun violence getting grouped into unintentional injuries.