

TO: The Honorable **Chair Roy, Vice Chair Rhodes**, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

FROM: Spencer Cantrell, JD
Assistant Scientist, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: January 28, 2026

RE: **HB 1084** An Act relative to the relinquishment of deadly weapons by those subject to a domestic violence protective order

My name is Spencer Cantrell, and I am an Assistant Scientist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. I am providing this testimony in my individual capacity, and the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent those of Johns Hopkins University.

HB 1084 is a critical bill that would improve the court's ability to ensure protection for victims and survivors of domestic violence by strengthening firearm surrender provisions in protective order cases. Prior to joining the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, I spent most of my professional career working in support of victims and survivors of domestic violence. Firearms were a common challenge in my work with clients as an attorney and victim advocate. Clients were too often threatened by their abuser with a firearm.

The research on the impact of firearms in domestic violence is consistent with what I saw in my work with individual victims and survivors and overwhelmingly shows the importance of consistently removing firearms from domestic violence abusers. Research shows that nearly half of all female homicide victims in the U.S. are killed by current or former intimate partners.¹ Firearms were the leading cause of death in New Hampshire's domestic violence homicides in 2020-2021.² Domestic violence has ripple effects on entire communities. We also know that most mass shooters have a history of committing domestic violence.³

The problem is more than clear. However, there are concrete, definitive steps that we can take to make victims of domestic violence and our entire communities much safer. Domestic violence

1. Tobin-Tyler E. Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises. *J Law Med Ethics*. 51(1):64-76. doi:10.1017/jme.2023.41

2. New Hampshire Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee 2020-2021 Biennial Report <https://nm.nh.gov/files/uploads/governor/documents/dvfr-report-2020-2021.pdf>

3. The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014–2019 | *Injury Epidemiology* | <https://injejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-021-00330>

4. Zeoli AM, McCourt A, Buggs S, Frattaroli S, Lilley D, Webster DW. Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations With Intimate Partner Homicide. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2018;187(11):2365-2371. doi:10.1093/aje/kwy174

5. Improving the Response to Firearms in Civil-Protection Order Cases. <https://bwjip.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Improving-the-Response-to-Firearms-in-Civil-Protection-Order-Cases.pdf>

6. Removing Guns From Batterers. doi:10.1177/1077801213490561

7. Can Justice System Interventions Prevent Intimate Partner Homicide? An Analysis of Rates of Help Seeking Prior to Fatality. doi:10.1177/0886260519851179

protective orders that require firearm removal are associated with a 12% reduction in intimate partner homicide and a 16% reduction in firearm intimate partner homicide.⁴ When domestic violence protective orders firearm restrictions cover ex parte orders, not just final protective orders, there is a 13% reduction in intimate partner homicide and a 16% reduction in firearm intimate partner homicide.³ Firearm removal is widely supported by domestic violence experts, advocates, law enforcement, and the public, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which made the official recommendation to mandate the removal of firearms when serving a DVPO.⁶

Under current law, gaps in enforcement mechanisms create dangerous loopholes that allow abusers to maintain access to firearms even after a protective order is issued. HB 1084 closes these gaps by mandating the surrender of firearms for respondents subject to both temporary and final protective orders, ensuring immediate risk reduction.⁵

Removing firearms from domestic violence incidents is not just a precaution—it is a proven, life-saving intervention. This bill ensures that New Hampshire is doing everything possible to prevent tragedies before they occur, proactively reducing the risk of domestic violence incidents involving guns.⁷

Accordingly, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **HB 1084**.

1. Tobin-Tyler E. Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises. *J Law Med Ethics*. 51(1):64-76. doi:10.1017/jme.2023.41

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