

## **Testimony on S.1, S.2, S.13 and S.22**

Senate Judiciary - February 28th, 2019

Chris Bradley, President - Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs

Thank you for providing the Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs (Federation) an opportunity to speak before this Committee. For any of you who do not know about the Federation, we are an organization that traces its roots in Vermont back to 1875. We are, in essence, an association of clubs: The Federation is an umbrella organization that represents over 50 Sporting Clubs across the Great State of Vermont, with those clubs representing tens of thousands of Vermonters.

In the packet of information I have provided, there are individual statements concerning S.1, S.2 and S.13. As I perceive that my time to give testimony will be limited by necessity: I will state that the Federation fully supports all three of those bills as they correct several oversights that resulted from the rather unsettling speed with which things were pushed through the House last year. I feel that issuing a strong statement of support for S.1, S.2 and S.13 are adequate, and given my time constraint I will therefore devote the rest of my time to addressing S.22.

Regarding S.22 and the general topic of Suicide: The Federation is unequivocal. Suicide is a tragedy which has touched just about everyone.

The Federation, all of its members, and most likely everyone here today deeply values human life. Too many of us know the boundless sorrow that results when someone takes their own life. I personally understand the profound sense of loss in the wake of a suicide, as I have lost a beloved uncle and a very dear close friend to suicide and both chose to insure that their lives ended by using a firearm. The death of my friend was especially reflective to me.

It is the Federation's understanding that the primary impetus for the consideration of bills that will enact a Waiting Period on the purchase of a firearm is to address suicide, and we believe it is an honest attempt to prevent similar tragedies in the future. We therefore fully understand and appreciate the intent. It is, in effect, an effort to Save Someone From Themselves.

We understand the role that firearms can play in suicide, and even though firearms are only used in approximately 1% of suicide attempts and we understand that when a firearm is used the outcome is usually lethal.

Our understanding of the relationship between people in jeopardy, firearms and suicide is why the Federation took the lead, along with the Gun Owners of Vermont, in establishing a

Vermont version of the New Hampshire Gun Shop Project. We became aware of this as a result of obtaining, reading and then embracing a document authored by the **Vermont Center for Health and Learning (VCHL)** under a grant supplied by the **Vermont Department of Mental Health (VDMH)** entitled *Reducing Suicide Risk by limiting Access to Lethal Means*. In taking on that lead role, the Federation worked hard to develop handouts, posters and related materials, and we then made that material available to our clubs and FFLs. We tackled that project on a completely volunteer basis with the intent of raising awareness by providing what to look for, tips on how to approach an individual, tips on questions to ask and other existing resources that sportsmen, sportswomen, Sporting Clubs and FFLs might use to help prevent such tragedies. Examples are in the packet - and while most are logoed by the SPC, the Federation and GOVT created the content.

When S.22 was released, we embraced the challenge to see if there was something further we might contribute. After reviewing what had been done and what existed, we sat down and mapped out the framework for a reporting system that could provide a simple yet effective method that had the potential of being more effective at stopping suicides than a Waiting Period, and we did that by completely focusing on HOW such a system might work, not the reasons WHY it couldn't work.

Immediately after mapping out what those systems might look like, we ran squarely into a wall of privacy rights; we ran into the very real possibility that the creation of a well-intentioned database of People of Concern could be misused and abused, and we ran into issues of Due Process. Should you be interested, I have included my write-up of the systems we envisioned in my packet.

While the Federation would have concerns over how such a system is implemented: I believe the medical community and others would likely step in rather heavily and oppose such systems due to the issue of Privacy Rights, despite there being several HIPPA exemptions to reporting people at risk as was outlined by Legal Counsel earlier this week..

To specifically address the two components of S.22, I will first address the second part of S.22: Safe Storage. As far as this portion is concerned, we fully believe that such a safe storage scheme was fully addressed by the SCOTUS in D.C. v. HELLER; we believe that this will be impossible to enforce; we believe that this will negatively impact the ability to defend one's home, and we believe that this bill creates bizarre situations where a person is in violation by simply leaving their bedroom in the middle of the night to visit the bathroom. We oppose this portion.

Regarding the Waiting Period portion, we offer the following points:

## 1. **Right to Self-Defense vs. An Attempt to Save a Life**

In considering this bill, we see a problem in attempting to achieve a balance between an individual's Constitutional right of Self Defense versus the establishment of a waiting period that might delay a person from committing suicide.

According to the **Vermont Judiciary - Annual Statistical Report for 2018**, there were 3,380 Relief From Abuse (RFA) filings in 2018, which was an increase of 8% in the filings from 2017. For those RFA filings which become Court Orders: These cases represent situations where a victim is able to convince a Court that they are under a real threat of bodily injury or death threats from another, such that the court will issue an order to keep the parties separated.

In these situations, a victim has been able to prove that they live under some unacceptable level of risk of injury or even death, and we believe it likely that some of these victims may well want to take the prudent step of obtaining the means of self defense to preserve their own life.

Even if there is only one victim that wishes to purchase the means to defend themselves: Is it reasonable, fair and Constitutional to subject that victim to any waiting period, when any delay might well make the difference between saving their own life or preventing injury?

How do we balance the rights of a person who wishes to preserve their life versus a person who is intent on ending theirs?

## 2. **People who Already Own a Firearm(s)**

In many cases, when a person who owns guns wants to buy another firearm, they will typically use the same FFL. This is certainly not always the case, but generally speaking, it is true in many cases.

In a situation where an FFL knows that the purchaser already owns a firearm, what purpose is served by delaying the possession?

## 3. **People Plan**

It is the Federation's view that the establishment of an arbitrary time limit will not work for the simple reason that people plan, and we have seen this time and time again.

Whatever the time period imposed, this cannot and will not guarantee that the person involved will be stopped from attempting to take their own life.

As another consideration I believe there is credence to the thought that when the

suicidal person attempts to buy a firearm and is then told that they cannot take immediate possession due to an arbitrary waiting period, that delay may well be seen by them as yet another injustice heaped upon them to add to their already perceived misery, thereby making them even more resolute.

#### **4. Effect on Gun Shows, Gun Clubs, Banquets and Similar Venues**

As a final point, but extremely important to sporting groups, individual sportsmen, sportswomen and local economies would be the negative effect of ANY waiting period on the long established venues of Guns Shows and Sports Banquets where firearm are possible prizes.

While there is much misinformation about gun shows, gun shows are a venue that allows both large and small Firearms Dealers (FFLs) to sell their wares to the public. FFLs have to compete not only with one another, but also compete with FFLs in other states, especially with rifles and shotguns. A citizen wanting to buy a firearm need only travel to NH or ME to buy a rifle or shotgun; no waiting period, and for NH - no tax.

For FFLs who attend Gun Shows, we believe there will be a decline in attendance, for the simple reason that their purpose to be there is to sell, and the somewhat count on leaving with far less inventory than what they came with. If an FFL cannot sell a firearm directly to a purchaser after a NICS check, why would the FFL travel to the gun show?

For citizens who attend gun shows, we believe there will likewise be a decrease in attendance, as these folks would know they could look, but not bring home.

Combined: Less FFLs mean less displays; less displays mean less incentive for citizens to attend; less citizens attending is less reason for FFLs to go...

Above and beyond being a social event that allows for the gathering of like minded people and provides a venue for a wide variety of vendors to sell all sorts of outdoor items that are not firearms, Gun Shows are a very real and very significant source of revenue to Sporting Clubs that host them. Examples of such events would be the Barre Gun Show (put on by the Barre Fish & Game Club), the Morrisville Gun Show (put on annually by Lamoille Valley Fish & Game Club), in addition to others.

Gun shows also bring significant revenue into their host town, such as Barre, Essex Junction and Rutland.

If any waiting period is enacted, this will have an adverse effect on all vendors who traditionally see value in paying for a table, and then displaying their wares at a Gun



Show. For vendors selling firearms this is even worse, as they will likely stop going at all if the Waiting Period exceeds the length of the show (meaning that the purchaser will have to make multiple trips, first to the gun show to discover what they want, and then another trip to the vendor's store sometime later to adhere to the Waiting Period and consummate the sale).

In a similar vein, many Sporting Groups raise much needed funds through banquets, and many of these Banquets provide firearms as prizes. Examples of such banquets would include the Vermont Sport Shooting Association (VSSA), the Federation, the Vermont Trappers Association (VTA) and the Vermont Bearhound Association (VBA), and others.

Again, these banquets represent significant revenue sources for these associations, and we see a negative impact on potential revenue in addition to an inconvenience for winners, especially when there is the very likely possibility that they already own a firearm.

In summary, while the Federation does understand the intent of a Waiting Period, we find it to be little more than wishful thinking. Further, we believe that it is an incredibly small number of people who might, very hypothetically, be saved. This then leads to the logical conclusion: A Waiting Period, no matter how well intentioned it may be or how hopeful it may appear to be, it does not justify the intrusion on the rights of others; neither the right to purchase a firearm, nor the right to privacy.

For the above reasons and others, the Federation must very respectfully oppose S.22.

Thank you for your time.

Testimony on S.1  
Senate Judiciary - February 28th, 2019  
Chris Bradley, President - Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs

The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs is in complete support of S.1, and we urge its passage with all due speed.

As originally written, 13 VSA §4021 (Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices) made no exception for the fact that organizations like the Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association (VSRPA) and many other clubs and organizations located in Vermont that annually run competitive shooting events, with these events attracting large numbers of competitors from out-of-state. When these competitors come, they bring the equipment that they usually use (such as standard capacity magazines that originally came with the rifle or pistol).

In the case of the VSRPA specifically, the VSRPA worked very hard to encourage the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP - [www.odcmp.com](http://www.odcmp.com)) to establish Vermont as the site of the New England CMP Travel Games, an event that runs for a full week in September and which brings in quite literally hundreds of competitors from across the United States and even abroad.

Like other aspects of what became S.55, there was the appearance, that there was not enough time allotted to thoroughly and fully vet all aspects of the various sections, and one of these aspects was the fact that these competitions exist and that the competitors coming into Vermont represent significant revenue both to Vermont and for a wide variety of Vermont businesses.

As a matter of fact, it was at the 11th hour that the VTFSC, working with Anne Donahue, convinced the House Judiciary to add what became 13 VSA §4021(d)(1)(F) due to the negative impact it would have on upcoming competitions such as the New England CMP Travel Games and other matches around the state. I believe the record will show that when they accepted what became 13 VSA §4021(d)(1)(F), they did so by stating that they would allow this but put a sunset provision on this to allow for a more expansive discussion subsequently.

In all cases that the VTFSC is aware of, and especially with the matches run by a VSRPA, competitors register for matches before they travel, so that they know that they will be accommodated before they arrive. It is therefore fully possible for an out-of-state competitor who is somehow found with one or more "Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices" in their possession while in the State of Vermont to both A) provide proof of their involvement in a scheduled competition, and B) provide a local contact of a Vermont organization such as the VSRPA to verify their scheduled involvement.

In summary, the VTFSC fully believes that it was never the intent of the Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Device bill to stop or otherwise prevent out-of-state competitors from coming into the State of Vermont to compete in lawful sporting events. We therefore support S.1, and we respectfully ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to do likewise.

Testimony on S.2  
Senate Judiciary - February 28th, 2019  
Chris Bradley, President - Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs

The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs is in complete support of S.2, and we urge its passage with all due speed.

As originally written, 13 VSA §4021 (Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices / LCAFD) made no provision for the fact that a LCAFD is in fact real property, and, like all other real property, it can be conveyed by will to another person.

In point of fact, the VTFSC is not aware of any other real item of property that cannot be conveyed via an inheritance / will. Further, it really seems to make no sense whatsoever that a firearm can be legally conveyed, but the magazines that go with that firearm cannot be legally conveyed.

In its current form, S.2 is quite limited in that a lawfully owned LCAFD can ONLY be willed to an immediate family member, with an immediate family member being clearly specified in 13 VSA 4019(A).

In summary, the VTFSC fully believes that it was never the intent of the LCAFD bill to create a fully unique and stand-alone class of property, property that in and of itself poses no risk to anyone, property that cannot be bequeathed to an immediate family member who likely currently has full access to it due to the fact that a LCAFD can be loaned for what appears to be an unlimited period of time. The VTFSC support S.2, and we respectfully ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to do likewise.

Testimony on S.13  
Senate Judiciary - February 28th, 2019  
Chris Bradley, President - Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs

The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs is in complete support of S.13, and we urge its passage with all due speed.

As originally written, 13 VSA §4021 (Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices / LCAFD) made no provision for the fact that a LCAFD is in fact real property, and, like all other real property, it can be conveyed by transfer to another person.

In point of fact, the VTFSC is not aware of any other real item of property that cannot be conveyed from one immediate family member to another. Further, given the existing wording of 13 VSA §4021, we would argue that the "loan" of a piece of property from one person to another is not technically a "transfer", such that it appears perfectly legal for Person A to loan one or more LCAFDs to Person B, as long as there is an understanding between the two parties that the interaction is a "loan" and not a change of ownership.

In its current form, S.13 is quite limited in that a lawfully owned LCAFD can ONLY be transferred to an immediate family member, with an immediate family member being clearly specified in 13 VSA 4019(A).

In summary, the VTFSC fully believes that it was never the intent of the LCAFD bill to create a fully unique and stand-alone class of property, property that in and of itself poses no risk to anyone, property that cannot be transferred to an immediate family member who likely currently has full access to it, due to the fact that a LCAFD can be loaned for what appears to be an unlimited and indefinite period of time. The VTFSC supports S.13, and we respectfully ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to do likewise.



# Reducing Suicide Risk by Limiting Access to Lethal Means

## *Impact of Firearms & Other Lethal Means on Suicidal Individuals*

Current Status

Recommendations for Next Steps

October 2014

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Lowering the risk of suicide by firearm in the gun-owning community is a complicated issue that may best be addressed from the inside of that community, through emphasis on its pre-existing culture of “watching out for each other,” and pride in their own commitment to gun safety.

It is important to distinguish that this issue, at its central essence, is not about refusing ownership of firearms or taking firearms away from citizens who care deeply about owning them. Rather, this issue is about finding and helping individuals who are struggling with so much pain and despair, that they are more likely to attempt suicide – and if they own a gun, they are more likely to utilize that gun in the attempt. When a gun is used in the attempt, it most often ends in death.

This research finds that to decrease firearm deaths by suicide the immediate focus must be on recognizing that saving the lives of gun owners is a conversation and a cause that must be shifted from firearm legislation to mental health promotion, and to communities, families, and networks of friends and peers. How can a community support efforts to help gun owners in crisis reach out for help, rather than reach for their gun at the moment of greatest despair? How can a community support the family and friends of gun owners in reaching out to their loved ones in need?

In conclusion, efforts to increase awareness and reduce risk in the gun-owning community need to be completely decoupled from legislative efforts related to firearms. Efforts toward visibility and awareness campaigns, and reduction in the stigma attached to mental health concerns and help-seeking, are strongly advised.<sup>169</sup>

A Gun Shop Project based on the New Hampshire model offers a feasible, accessible first step approach, if implemented with the expert advice and guidance of gun owners themselves. Vermont is well-positioned to take

action immediately and launch the first step – a Vermont Gun Shop Project. Further efforts to enhance the aims of the Gun Shop Project through interventions such as Zero Suicide, CALM and Man Therapy™ are strongly advised as ongoing follow up.

### III. REDUCING ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS: OTHER

#### A. Overview

As noted in Section II, the vast majority of Vermont suicide deaths (60%) are the result of firearms, higher than the national average of 50%.<sup>170, 171</sup> The speed of movement from preparation to attempt, coupled with the high lethality of firearms, makes them the primary focus in reducing access to lethal means efforts. As such, this research focused primarily on firearms. However, a brief review was conducted of restriction of other lethal means. A more detailed review is beyond the scope of this research.

Other lethal means accounting for suicide deaths in Vermont include: poisoning-including overdose (22%); suffocation, including hanging (14%); drowning (2%); cutting or piercing (1%); and falls (1%). The specific means used in these deaths varies, and restriction can be considerably more complicated, such as high structures to leap from, plastic bags for suffocation, or access to over the counter medications for overdose.

A notable sex discrepancy exists when considering lethal means. The most recent Vermont research tells us that men are four times more likely to die by suicide than women overall, and 64% of male suicide deaths were firearm related. Here we see reflected the effects of high lethality of means choice. While 43% of female suicide deaths were also firearm related, a higher number were due to poisoning, at 48%.<sup>172</sup> Nationally, poisoning is third

<sup>169</sup> One possible exception, based on data from other states, may be child-access prevention laws. See Webster, ScD, MPH, Daniel W., et al, “Association Between Youth-Focused Firearm Laws and Youth Suicides.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol 292, No. 5, 594-601. 4 August 2004.

<sup>170</sup> VCHIP, Vermont Vital Statistics System.

<sup>171</sup> American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.



## Statewide Suicide Prevention Information System

I begin this document with a disclaimer, with that disclaimer being that this is nothing more than an idea. It has not been completely vetted, approved or even supported by the Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs, I am aware that there are issues of Due Process and Confidentiality involved, and the VTFSC will be internally discussing this moving forward. People reading this document should not and cannot infer that the VTFSC as a whole supports this idea, it is however offered to start a dialogue.

In many of cases involving tragedies with firearms, especially in situations where a person commits suicide: Information about an individual's state of mental health was known to one or more persons prior to a **Person of Concern** carrying out their dark thoughts.

A key to addressing the problem of suicide therefore may be to create the infrastructure for a reporting system, a system that allows for the capture of credible information from credible individuals about **Persons of Concern**, and then makes that information available in a controlled and secure fashion to Vermont Firearm dealers so that these dealers can be made aware that there is a credible concern. Armed with that knowledge, a Firearm dealer could at a minimum delay, if not stop, the sale of a firearm to a **Person of Concern** who is a potential risk to themselves or others.

As currently envisioned, information about **Persons of Concern** would only be allowed to come from an **Immediate Family Member**; a person who is likely to be in the best position to be aware of the issues bearing down on a **Person of Concern**. Sources of such information could also possibly be expanded to include Courts, Law Enforcement, Medical Professionals, School Administrators and possibly even other citizens (thru their local PD).

In considering how a Federal Firearm License-holder (**FFL**) handles the sale of a firearm, nothing in existing state or Federal law requires the **FFL** to make a sale; meaning that an **FFL** is at complete liberty to deny a sale to anyone. This is above and beyond the fact that the purchaser must also be able to pass a background check through the National Instant Background Check System (**NICS**) in order for the sale to be approved.

As a review: If a person wishes to purchase a firearm today in Vermont, a background check is mandated to occur against **NICS**, with that background check being conducted by a business or individual who is registered with the Federal Government as an **FFL**.

Using identifying information provided by the purchaser on Federal Form (Form 4473), the **FFL** calls a phone number of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with a lookup then being conducted against **NICS**. If the **FFL** is informed of any problem, I.E. **NICS** reports that the purchaser is a "Prohibited Person", then the sale is negated by existing Federal law and the transaction will not proceed.

In some situations however, **NICS** may not provide correct results or the results may be incomplete, such that **NICS** cannot give a definitive **Yes** or **No** answer to whether the purchaser is a **Prohibited Person** or not. In these situations: The sale is allowed to proceed after a 72-hour time limit, unless the glitch with **NICS** is resolved to be a **No** within 72-hours, which would then stop the sale.

So: By existing Federal Law the possibility of a 72-hour delay is a known time limit delay.

One consideration for handling a Statewide Suicide Information Prevention System (SSIPS) would be to attempt to utilize **NICS** to capture and report such information; however this is not feasible for a number of reasons. Also, and while state-wide police information systems also exist, it is my current understanding that it is not likely feasible to attempt to have these systems enhanced or modified to handle this information either.

What is needed then is pretty simple and straight-forward: A database system could be established that records skeletal information concerning **Persons of Concern**, with that information then being made available to **FFLs** via a phone call.

What this document proposes is the establishment of a stand-alone, non-internet connected computer database system which is designed to record information from credible sources about **Persons of Concern** who may be a risk to themselves or others.

This information, which would be tightly controlled and possibly further controlled by automatic deletion according to preset time limits, would then be used solely to conduct a 2nd-level background check by a **FFL**. So, either before or after running a **NICS** check, an **FFL** would be able to call a Vermont phone number with that call launching an inquiry against the **Database for Persons of Concern**. Under two of the options that are attached (1 & 2), if that call resulted in a match between the purchaser and a **Person of Concern**, a delay of 72-hours would begin, allowing a time window through which the **Immediate Family Member** who reported the **Person of Concern** could be notified (to hopefully intervene using resources provided by organizations such as the Suicide Prevention Council (SPC)), in addition to allowing a 72-hour waiting period for the **Person of Concern** to reflect on their decision. Under Option 3 there could be no 72-hour delay, the **FFL** would use his discretion.

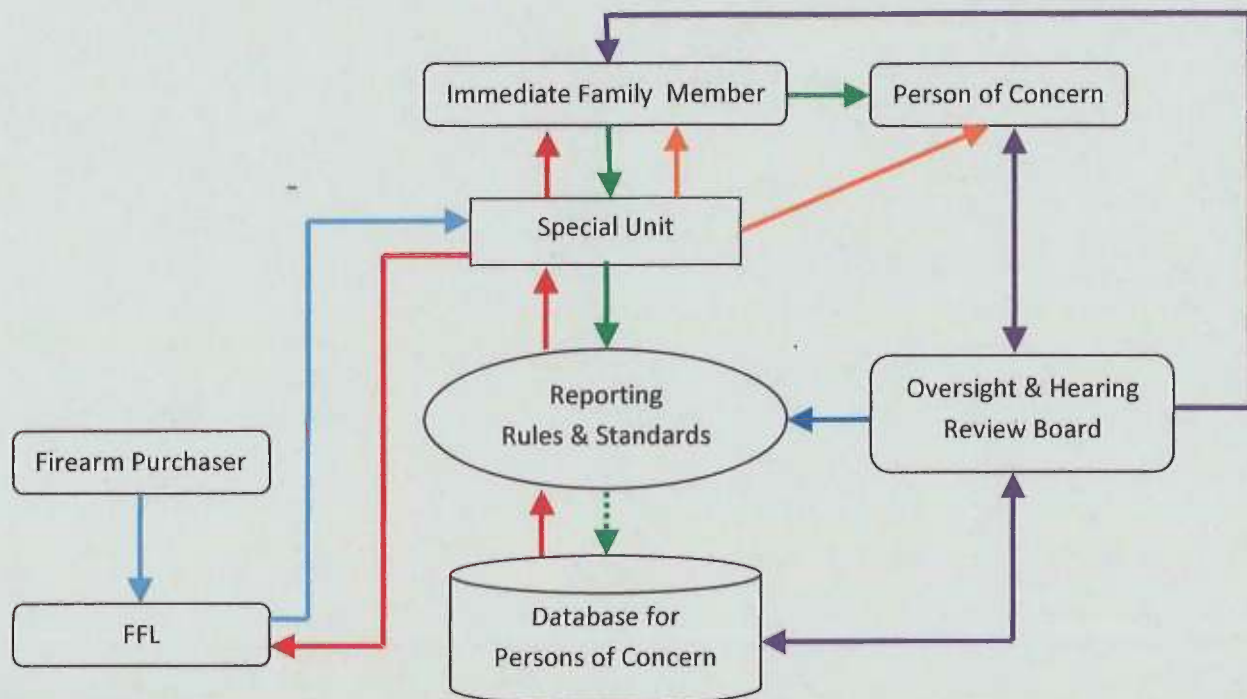
In documenting how such a system would operate: I set aside the immediate and critical concerns of such things as confidentiality, privacy, due process and similar sticking points as being details that need to be properly handled. Against those legitimate concerns however I see a bigger picture of having the real ability to possibly save the life of a **Person of Concern**, or possibly save the lives of others that the **Person of Concern** might try to harm.

As depicted in the following pages, I have outlined three approaches to how such a system might work. Options 1 & 2 envision direct involvement by the State, with the difference between them involving how active a **Review Board** might be in the processing; whereas the 3rd option puts this system into the hand of an organization like the Center for Health and Learning / Vermont Suicide Prevention Council.

So, when a parent, a sibling or a spouse has concerns about the mental stability of a loved one: They would have the ability to have their concerns logged into a state-wide system, either with a 72-hour waiting period or not, with an **FFL** who probably has no interest in selling a firearm to an at-risk person then being able to become aware of those concerns.

As a central point to such a hypothetical system, the law that enacted it should call for significant and harsh penalties on the misuse of such a system by people who falsely report concerns for whatever reason.

# Statewide Suicide Prevention Information System - Option 1

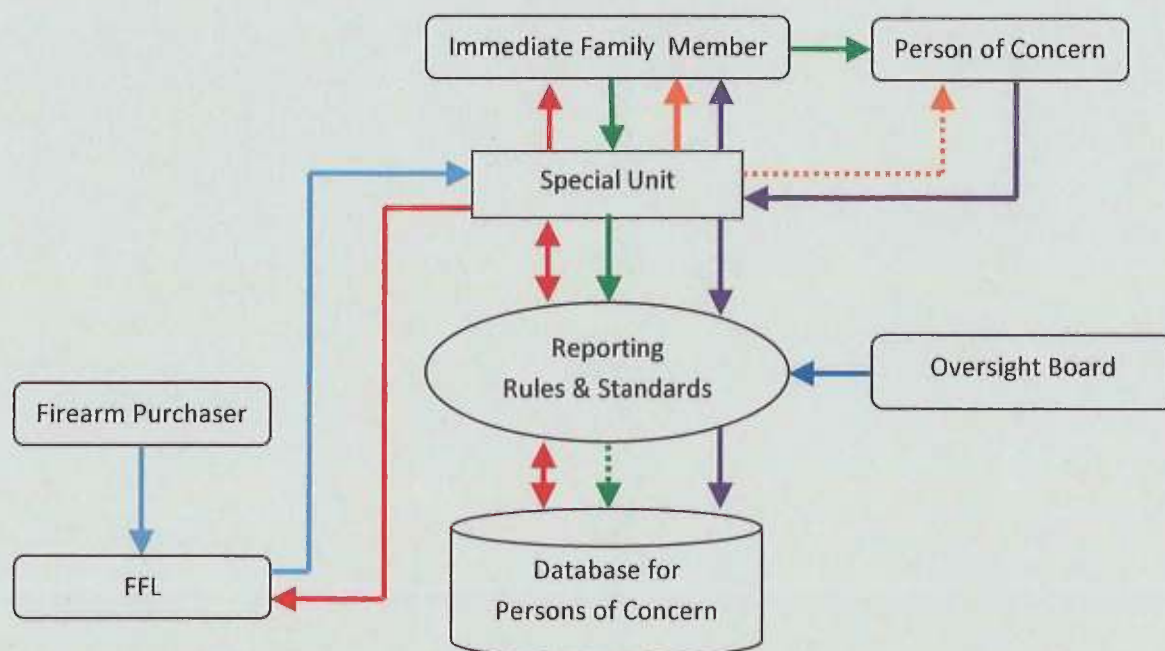


## Overview of Processing

1. An **Oversight & Hearing Review Board** is created which establishes the **Reporting Rules and Standards** for the data being processed into and out of the **Database for Persons of Concern** and the conduct of the **Special Unit**. (**DARK BLUE** arrow)
2. When a concern over a specific individual arises, an **Immediate Family Member** can call a **Special Unit** that has been created to handle the processing of a report for a **Person of Concern**. Using rules established by an **Oversight & Review Board**, the **Special Unit** makes a decision to either enter or not enter the **Person of Concern** into the **Database for Persons of Concern**. (**GREEN** arrows)
3. If the decision is made to record the **Person of Concern**, the **Special Unit** will perform the data entry and then separately notify the **Immediate Family Member** and the **Person of Concern** of this action. Additionally, the **Person of Concern** is notified that unless they meet with the **Oversight & Review Board**, their ability to purchase a firearm will be blocked for 72 hours, with that 72-hour block commencing at the point in time that they attempt to purchase a firearm. If the decision is made to not enter the **Person of Concern**, then the **Immediate Family Member** is notified of this fact, with no notice given to the supposed **Person of Concern**. See **ORANGE** arrows.
4. Subsequent to a Hearing & Review, the **Oversight and Review Board** has the authority to remove a **Person of Concern** from the **Database for Persons of Concern**. Automatic removal of a **Person of Concern** may also occur due to preset expiration limits. If removed, the **Oversight and Review Board** would notify both the **Immediate Family Member** and the **Person of Concern** of this removal. See **PURPLE** arrows.
5. When a **Firearm Purchaser** presents themselves to an **FFL** with a desire to purchase a firearm, the **FFL** will check NICS, and shall then call the **Special Unit** with information about the **Firearm Purchaser**. (**LIGHT BLUE** arrows)
6. If the response from the **Special Unit** indicates a recorded concern regarding the **Firearm Purchaser**, the sale is blocked / delayed for 72 hours, with the **Immediate Family Member** being notified that an attempt to purchase was made. This block would automatically be removed in 72 hours unless renewed by the **Immediate Family member** under specific conditions determined by the **Oversight & Hearing Board**. (**RED** arrows)



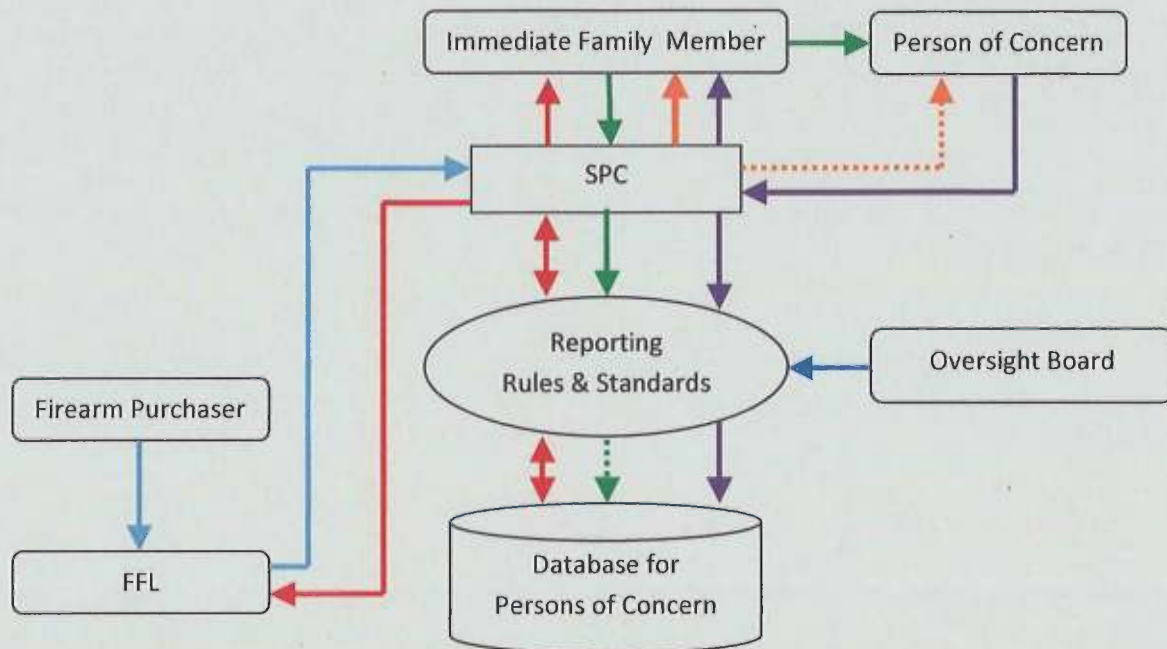
## Statewide Suicide Prevention Information System - Option 2



### Overview of Processing

1. An **Oversight Board** is created which establishes the **Reporting Rules and Standards** for the data being processed into and out of the **Database for Persons of Concern** and the conduct of the **Special Unit**. (DARK BLUE arrow)
2. When a concern over a specific individual arises, an **Immediate Family Member** can call a **Special Unit** that has been created to handle the processing of a report for a **Person of Concern**. Using rules established by an **Oversight Board**, the **Special Unit** makes a decision to either record or not record the **Person of Concern** into the **Database for Persons of Concern**. (GREEN arrows)
3. If the decision is made to record the **Person of Concern**, the **Special Unit** will perform the data entry and then notify both the **Immediate Family Member** and the **Person of Concern** of this action. Additionally, the **Person of Concern** is notified that unless they contact the **Special Unit** to request the block be removed, their ability to purchase a firearm will be blocked /delayed for 72 hours, with that 72-hour block commencing at the point in time that they attempt to purchase a firearm. If the decision is made to not enter the **Person of Concern**, then the **Immediate Family Member** is notified of this fact. See ORANGE arrows.
4. If and when the **Person of Concern** contacts the **Special Unit** and requests that the block be removed, a mandatory 72-hour delay will be initiated, and both the **Person of Concern** and the **Immediate Family Member** will be notified that the block will be removed within 72-hours. See PURPLE arrows.
5. When a **Firearm Purchaser** presents themselves to an **FFL** with a desire to purchase a firearm, the **FFL** will check NICS, and shall then call the **Special Unit** with information about the **Firearm Purchaser**. (LIGHT BLUE arrows)
6. If the response from the **Special Unit** indicates a recorded concern regarding the **Firearm Purchaser**, the sale is blocked / delayed for 72 hours, with the **Immediate Family Member** being notified that an attempt to purchase was made. This block would automatically be removed in 72 hours unless renewed by the **Immediate Family Member** under specific conditions determined by the **Oversight Board**. (RED arrows)

## Statewide Suicide Prevention Information System - Option 3



### Overview of Processing

1. An **Oversight Board** is created which establishes the **Reporting Rules and Standards** for the data being processed into and out of the **Database for Persons of Concern** by the **Suicide Prevention Council (SPC)**. (DARK BLUE arrow)
2. When a concern over a specific individual arises, an **Immediate Family Member** calls the **SPC** to handle the processing of a report for a **Person of Concern**. Using rules established by an **Oversight Board**, the **SPC** makes a decision to either record or not record the **Person of Concern** into the **Database for Persons of Concern**. (GREEN arrows)
3. If the decision is made to record the **Person of Concern**, the **SPC** performs the data entry and then notifies both the **Immediate Family Member** and the **Person of Concern** of this action. Additionally, the **Person of Concern** is notified that unless they contact the **SPC** to request their name be removed, their name will remain in the **Database for Person of Concern**, and that this information will be available to **FFLs** that may then not complete a firearm sale. If the decision is made to not enter the **Person of Concern**, then the **Immediate Family Member** is notified of this fact. See ORANGE arrows.
4. If and when the **Person of Concern** contacts the **SPC** and requests that the block be removed, the name is immediately removed, with both the **Person of Concern** and the **Immediate Family Member** notified that the **Person of Concern's** name has been removed. See PURPLE arrows.
5. When a **Firearm Purchaser** presents themselves to an **FFL** with a desire to purchase a firearm, the **FFL** will check NICS, and may then call the **SPC** with information about the **Firearm Purchaser**. (LIGHT BLUE arrows)
6. If the response from the **SPC** indicates a recorded concern regarding the **Firearm Purchaser**, the **FFL** may then use his / her discretion on whether the sale should be allowed or not. (RED arrows)



## **How to Be Helpful to Someone Who Is Threatening Suicide**

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

## **Be Aware of Feelings**

Many people at some time in their lives think about suicide. Most decide to live because they eventually come to realize that the crisis is temporary and death is permanent. On the other hand, people having a crisis sometimes perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control. These are some of the feelings and thoughts they experience:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat or work
- Can't get out of depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see a future without pain
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't get someone's attention
- Can't seem to get control

If you experience these feelings, *get help!* If someone you know exhibits these symptoms, *offer help!*

**Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**



**Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs<sup>Inc.</sup>**  
and the tax exempt  
**Federation Fund for Conservation and Training**



## **Vermont Firearm Retailers**

### **Your Vigilance Could Save A Life!**

Statistics show that some firearm suicides occur with guns purchased or rented within that same week, usually within hours. While not all suicides are preventable, you can reduce the odds that a gun rented or sold at your store could be used in a suicide moments later.

### **Signs That Someone May Be Suicidal**

*Note: None of these signs clearly indicate someone is suicidal, but if any are present (especially if more than one is present), use extra caution in deciding how to proceed.*

- No knowledge about guns AND no interest in learning; asks no questions
- Doesn't care which gun they buy or seem responsive to your questions about the purchase
- Gives unconvincing response when asked about prior shooting experience/training
- No interest in firearm instruction or safety
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Makes comments that could suggest suicide (e.g. "I don't need a lot of ammunition" or "I won't have the gun for long.")
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears)

### **Options For Responding To A Customer Who May Be Suicidal**

- Notify store owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective purchase
- Urge customer with little firearm experience to seek training before buying
- Ask the customer why they want a firearm and how and where they plans to use it
- If they indicate that they are buying for self-defense, offer to sell pepper spray instead
- Ask person directly if they are suicidal; if yes, offer National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK [8255])
- Notify nearby dealers/range owners that someone you denied a sale to may go to their store; notify police
- Trust your instincts; you are under no obligation to sell a gun to anyone

### **What Else Can You Do?**

- Display a suicide prevention hotline poster in your store
- Give customers firearm safety brochures that include information about recognizing suicide warning signs and keep firearms away from suicidal or depressed family members and friends
- For more information on suicide prevention visit [www.vtspc.org](http://www.vtspc.org)
- Spread the word! Ask other dealers/range owners you know to visit our website to request our materials

## **Vermont Range Owners**

### **Your Vigilance Could Save A Life!**

Statistics show that some firearm suicides occur with guns purchased or rented within that same week, usually within hours. While not all suicides are preventable, you can reduce the odds that a gun rented, sold or used at your range could be used in a suicide moments later.

### **Signs That Someone May Be Suicidal**

*Note: None of these signs clearly indicate someone is suicidal, but if any are present (especially if more than one is present), use extra caution in deciding how to proceed.*

- No knowledge about guns AND no interest in learning; asks no questions
- Doesn't care which gun they rent or seem responsive to your questions about the rental
- Gives unconvincing response when asked about prior shooting experience/training
- No interest in firearm instruction or safety
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Makes comments that could suggest suicide (e.g. "I don't need a lot of ammunition" or "I won't have the gun for long.")
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears)

### **Options For Responding To A Customer Who May Be Suicidal**

- Notify range owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective rental
- Urge customer with little firearm experience to seek training before renting
- Ask person directly if they are suicidal; if yes, offer National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK [8255])
- Notify nearby dealers/range owners that someone you denied a rental may go to their store/range; notify police
- Trust your instincts; you are under no obligation to rent or loan a gun to anyone

### **What Else Can You Do?**

- Display a suicide prevention hotline poster in your range
- Give customers firearm safety brochures that include information about recognizing suicide warning signs and keep firearms away from suicidal or depressed family members and friends
- For more information on suicide prevention visit [www.vtspc.org](http://www.vtspc.org)
- Spread the word! Ask other dealers/range owners you know to visit our website to request our materials



## When A Family Member Is Suicidal

### Firearm Storage Options

A firearm available to a person in the depths of despair can end a life in an instant! Firearms are used in five out of ten suicides in the U.S. Removing lethal means from a vulnerable person, be it an impulsive teenager or someone going through a difficult time, can save a life. It's like keeping the car keys from a person who has had too much to drink.

#### Removing Firearms from the Home is the Safest Choice

- **Temporarily store the firearms at the home of a trusted relative or friend.** Be sure the person at risk cannot get the firearms before or after they are removed. NOTE: Not all people can hold the guns for you. Check the list of prohibited persons<sup>1</sup> under federal law.
- **Do not** place the firearms in a bank safe deposit box. Most states have laws that prohibit carrying a weapon into federally insured buildings such as banks.
- **Sell** the firearms following the appropriate legal guidelines.

#### Who Else Can Help Store or Dispose of Firearms?

- Some (not all) law enforcement departments will take firearms. Some offer temporary storage, some offer permanent disposal options, and some offer both.
  - **Call** your local police department, sheriff or state police.
  - **Identify** yourself and explain your concern.
  - **Ask** for the Officer on Duty; be sure to write down his/her name and the department's name.
  - **Arrange** with the Officer a time and location for him/her to pick up the firearms, if they offer that service.
  - **Do not** bring the firearms to the police unless told to by the Officer on Duty.
- For other storage options, check with local gun shops, gun clubs, pawn shops or commercial storage facilities. There may be a charge for this service and you may be required to complete a background check to retrieve your firearms.

#### Do Firearms Need to Be Ready to Go in a Certain Way?

- If you know how to safely unload the firearms, unload them.
- If you do not know how to unload the firearms, tell the Officer before he/she arrives to pick them up.
- If the Officer asks you to bring the firearms to the police station, name who will bring them, what the person looks like, and the time the person will arrive.

## Letter of Agreement Regarding My Firearms\*

I am voluntarily asking you to hold on to my firearms.

I expect that you will keep my firearms in good condition and keep them safe from any unauthorized access. In accepting these firearms, you are acknowledging that you are not a person who is prohibited from being able to legally possess these firearms on a temporary basis on my behalf.

The firearms I am giving you to temporarily hold include (use back if additional space is needed):

[illegible]

As this is a wholly voluntary act, we both understand that I can retrieve my firearms at any time as long as I am legally able to do so.

Firearm Owner

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary Firearm Custodian

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*This document has not been reviewed by any legal counsel and is provided as an example only.  
Check with an attorney if a more legally binding document is needed.