The American Psychological Association submits this statement for the record for the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution hearing on April 28, 2021:

The evidence is becoming increasingly clear, Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws have the potential to save lives and prevent suicides. The American Psychological Association strongly supports efforts in Congress to fund these sensible state laws as well as conduct the research necessary to ensure their effectiveness.

Suicide has become a national crisis with rates increasing by more than 30% in half of U.S. States. In fact, data shows almost 80% of individuals suffering from suicidal thoughts show warning signs emphasizing the need for ERPO laws that can intervene early when risk is detected. Emerging evidence demonstrate that ERPO laws have the potential to lower suicide rates while preserving an individual’s due process and second amendment rights. A study in 2019 examining the effect of ERPO laws in Indiana showed one life being saved from suicide for every 10-gun removals. Moreover, a Connecticut study’s analysis examining over 700 gun removals between 1999 and 2013, found that for every 10 to 20 firearms removed by implementation of an ERPO, there was one suicide related death avoided. Accordingly, APA supports the enactment of ERPO laws in every U.S. State and territory.

APA is the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, with more than 122,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students as its members. Our association advocates for a public health approach to gun violence prevention, supporting evidence-based programs and policies that can reduce the occurrence and impact of firearm-related violence in the United States.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2019), Suicide Rising Across the U.S., More than a Mental Health Concern. https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html