

New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops



Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Most Reverend John C. Wester
Diocese of Las Cruces, Most Reverend Peter Baldacchino
Diocese of Gallup, Most Reverend James S. Wall
NMCCB Executive Director, Allen Sánchez
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STATEMENT

New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops Support Red Flag Gun Bill (SB 5) for Extreme Risk

ALBUQUERQUE – Friday, February 7, 2020--With more than 500 parishes and missions across New Mexico, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe is confronted just about every day by the ravages of gun violence: we bury the victims and console the families.

Nearly 400 New Mexicans were killed by firearms in 2017, and the problem is getting worse.

Nothing is more valuable than a human life, therefore, we support legislation to try to keep firearms out of the hands of those who are a threat to themselves, their families or others.

The subject of firearm ownership is fraught with reactive anger and fear. We must confront those emotions and rise above them, together, for the common good; for the good of families and communities all across our state who have been touched by gun violence.

Here's how the law would work:

- A law enforcement officer who has received a report that a person is an armed threat to himself or others could petition a judge for a temporary order preventing the individual from possessing a firearm.
- A judge who issued a temporary order would be required to hold a hearing within 10 days on whether to extend the order for a year. The subject of the order would have an opportunity to argue against the extension.

There would be no invasive home searches for firearms that could endanger law enforcement officers. The due process rights of firearm owners would be protected by the legislation.

Seventeen other states and the District of Columbia have enacted red flag laws over the past two decades, and studies show the laws work in preventing suicides and other firearm deaths.

Suicides are the most common way that firearms kill people, and research of extreme-risk laws in Connecticut and Indiana found the laws were linked to reductions in firearm suicides. A study in California found its law can play a role in efforts to prevent mass shootings.

The red flag bill pending in the New Mexico Legislature is a tool to prevent firearm deaths. Every suicide is preventable. Every gun death is preventable. While we won't be able to prevent them all, we can give ourselves a chance to do better; to protect those who need help in a moment of crisis, and to protect families and communities. All lives are sacred, and we must do all we can to protect them, each and every one. An extreme-risk protection order law is an important step in a positive direction for New Mexico. Contact Allen Sánchez 505.319.3334 --
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