

Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Cubs

Position on Waiting Periods

As we understand it: The suggested need for establishing a Waiting Period is as a way to help reduce impulsive acts done with firearms, specifically suicides or murders, with this being referred to as "reducing access to lethal means".

Regarding suicide by firearm: According to the [Vermont Department of Mental Health](#), in 2016 there were 1,141 suicide attempts. Of those, 1,070 or 94% were attempts using something other than a firearm. For those suicides where a firearm was used, the vast majority were done with a firearm that was already owned.

It is actually a pretty rare event when a person will go to a store, buy a firearm and then kill themselves with it.

Regarding the impulsive use of a firearm for murder, this is not a common event in Vermont either. Per the FBI: [Vermont is consistently the first or second safest state in the nation](#) when it comes to violent crime. Impulsively buying a firearm for immediate nefarious purposes is also a pretty rare event.

A Waiting Period will be ineffective for the simple reason that people plan. When someone decides to hop in their car, go to a store, fake any distress, buy a firearm and then go home and kill themselves with it: That's a plan. No matter what time limit is imposed, if someone is determined they will simply plan around a Waiting Period.

There are other problems with a Waiting Period.

To begin: Just what is the balance between the concept of a Waiting Period and the unalienable Right of Self Defense? According to the [Judiciary Annual Statistical Report](#), there were 3,380 Relief From Abuse (RFA) filings in 2018, an increase of 8% over 2017. Temporary Restraining Orders were granted for 2,636 cases. Final orders were granted for 1,589.

There can be no question that there are Vermonters who are in fear of violence as it is clear there are thousands. Likewise there should be no question that Vermonters have a Right to Self Defense.

It is not unrealistic to believe that some of those Vermonters under the threat of violence may choose to immediately obtain the means for their defense. Beyond those Vermonters is any Vermonter who understands that the defensive use of firearms is a "[Common Occurrence](#)" and who also wish to immediately prepare themselves.

How tragic will it be when a known victim is killed by a known aggressor while the victim was in a Waiting Period? These stories exist now, just not in Vermont.

What of the situation where the purchaser already owns a firearm? There were [41,000 firearm transfers in Vermont for 2018](#), one of which we now hope was preventable. If the intent of a Waiting Period is to reduce access to lethal means, what is accomplished when a Vermonter already owns lethal means?

While establishing a Waiting Period might, possibly, maybe help reduce what are already rare events, Waiting Periods will prove ineffective. Beyond that, since Waiting Periods will not address 94% of overall suicide attempts, and will not address when lethal means are already owned: It seems clear we need a solution that is better focused on the overall problem.

Establishing a Waiting Period WILL put Vermonters at risk who are under the threat of violence by denying them the ability to defend themselves in a timely manner; it will inconvenience tens of thousands of Vermonters annually in lost time and money to make a redundant trip; and it will financially hurt sporting organizations, businesses, and towns that host Sportsman's Shows, Banquets and Auctions. It also invites yet another court challenge.

The benefits of a Waiting Period are questionable - the negatives are real.

The Federation strongly urges the legislature to not support any Waiting Period.