

RELEASE: Governor Again Blocks Legislation Critical to Reducing Gun Deaths and Suicide

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New Hampshire House of Representatives Concord, New Hampshire House Majority Office

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR AGAIN BLOCKS LEGISLATION CRITICAL TO REDUCING GUN DEATHS AND SUICIDE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE –Today, Governor Sununu vetoed HB 687, legislation aimed to reduce gun deaths and suicides in New Hampshire. 19 other states and the District of Columbia have enacted similar legislation that empowers family members and law enforcement to act in responding to a mental health crisis and potentially prevent a lethal tragedy. **Prime sponsor of the bill, Representative Debra Altschiller (D-Stratham)**, released the following statement:

“Across the nation, professionals have cited a significant rise in mental health crisis during the coronavirus pandemic while underfunded community mental health centers around the country and in New Hampshire are struggling to stay afloat and manage the caseload. We know that gun sales have increased dramatically since March, some 3 million more guns purchased than average and that almost half of these sales were to first time gun owners. In a state that has seen a 47% increase pre-pandemic in the suicide rate and the knowledge that over half of all suicides involve a firearm, it is sickening that Governor Sununu refuses to sign widely accepted legislation that can empower family members and law enforcement to prevent more tragic loss.”

“The Extreme Risk Protection Order was a civil order, constitutionally tested, that saves lives by temporarily suspending access to firearms when a person is in active crisis and restores access when the crisis has passed.”

“We know the mental health impact on frontline workers and the general populace from traumatic events like a global pandemic have long-lasting, and dangerous ramifications for months to years. Suicide is New Hampshire’s second leading cause of death, a horrifying reality for so many Granite State families left behind. This legislation would have enabled families to take action to protect their loved one when they see warning signs and prevent their family from becoming another sobering statistic in this state. With this veto, Governor Sununu has abandoned Granite State families once

again.”

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

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