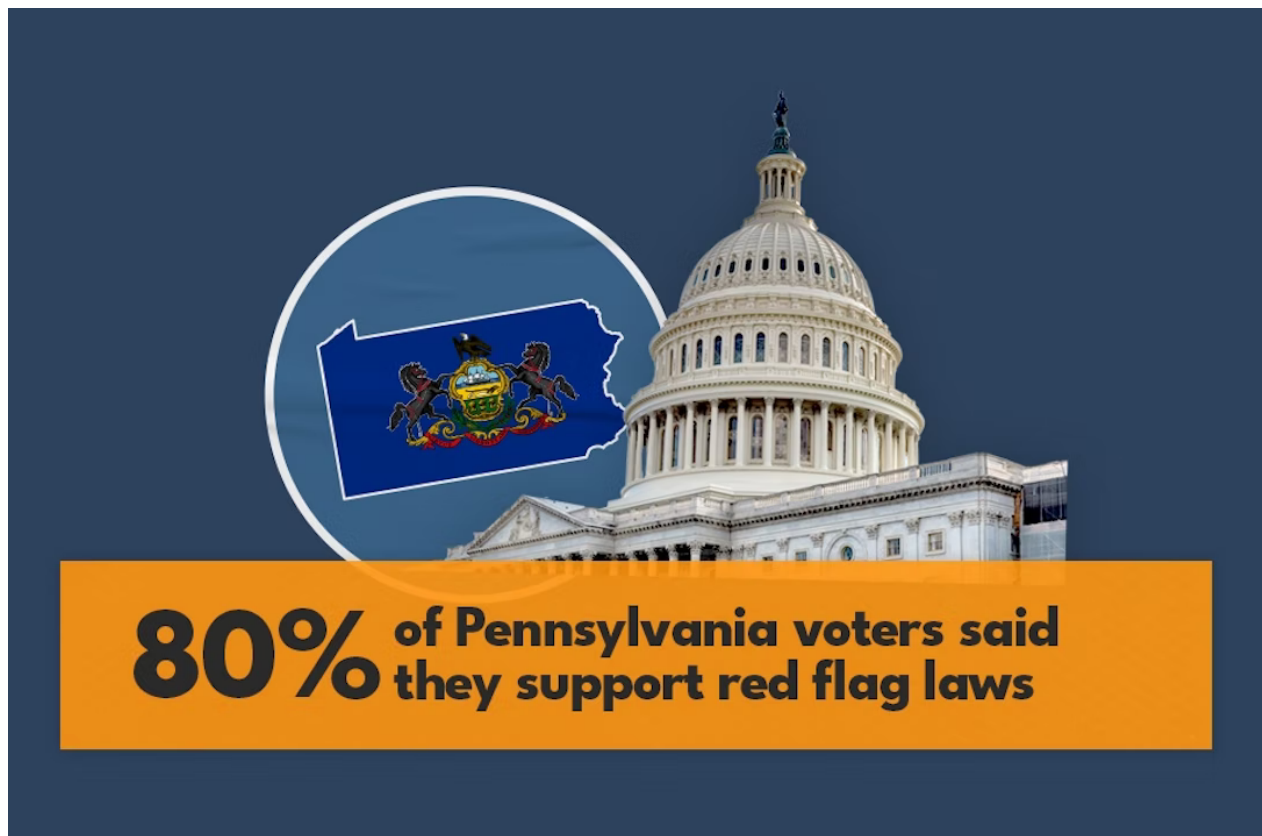


Pennsylvania Voters Support Gun Safety Reforms



The recent horrific tragedies in Buffalo and Uvalde have once again catapulted the gun safety debate onto the front page. So far in 2022, there have been over 250 mass shootings in the United States. And even as a growing number of states have mobilized to enact common-sense gun regulations, progress on this issue has been stalled at the national level for decades. However, there may be light at the end of this dark tunnel in the form of a bipartisan deal that has brought lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to the table.

While the final text of the Senate compromise has yet to be released, the framework under discussion encompasses some of the most basic, sensible gun reforms, including enhancing background checks for individuals under 21, closing the “boyfriend” loophole to remove guns from domestic abusers, making investments in mental health services and school safety resources, and incentivizing states to implement extreme risk protection order policies, also known as “red flag” laws, that allow law enforcement to temporarily remove guns from the possession of those who might be a danger to themselves or others. Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania has been

instrumental in leading the group of Republicans to a meeting of the minds with their Democratic counterparts. In a new poll conducted by Third Way and Republican polling firm GS Strategy Group, it is evident that, regardless of party affiliation, Pennsylvania voters support the measures currently under debate in Washington and want Congress to pass them into law. ¹

Pennsylvania voters see a need for action on gun safety.

A strong majority of Pennsylvanians believe there is need for action on gun regulations in the wake of the tragedy in Uvalde. When asked whether it was too easy or too hard to get a gun in America, 76% of Pennsylvania voters said it was too easy, with 51% saying it was *much* too easy. This sentiment was shared among Pennsylvanians who are Republicans, self-described conservatives, and gun owners as well. Each group said it was too easy to get a gun (58%, 50%, and 66% respectively).

And asked directly, 58% of respondents said they were more likely to support passing stricter gun laws at the federal level after the Uvalde shooting.

Pennsylvania voters support the policies proposed by the bipartisan group in the Senate.

When asked about the specific policy items being considered in the Senate's bipartisan framework, voters voiced overwhelmingly consistent support for each proposal. A full 80% of Pennsylvania voters said they support red flag laws that give family members or law enforcement authority to petition for a judge's order to temporarily remove guns from someone who poses a violent threat to themselves or others. In fact, 61%, say they *strongly* support this proposal. And supermajorities of Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners expressed support for red flag laws.

Pennsylvanians also strongly agreed with the idea of expanding scrutiny for young adults who want access to firearms: 82% said they support allowing law enforcement to access sealed juvenile records when conducting background checks, to ensure those with a violent criminal history are not able to purchase guns, including three-quarters of Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners in the sample. And 71% of voters say they support funding research around the effectiveness of gun safety policies.

Not only do Pennsylvania voters support the policy proposals in the current Senate framework, they actually want their representatives to go further. When asked whether they support requiring a background check before every gun purchase, including online and at gun shows, 89% of voters responded in the affirmative, including more than 3 in 4 Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners, with 80% of all voters saying they *strongly* support that requirement. And 79% said they support increasing the minimum age to purchase a semi-automatic weapon from 18 to 21 years old, including 6 in 10 among each of those three groups.

Pennsylvania Voter Support for Various Policy Proposals

Policy		All Voters	Republicans	Conservatives	Gun Owners
Red flag laws	SUPPORT	80%	67%	61%	70%
	STRONGLY	61%	44%	38%	48%
Requiring background checks for all gun purchases	SUPPORT	89%	81%	77%	85%
	STRONGLY	80%	64%	60%	70%
Raising the purchase age for semi-automatic weapons to 21	SUPPORT	79%	65%	61%	67%
	STRONGLY	68%	52%	45%	54%
Providing access to juvenile records for background checks	SUPPORT	82%	80%	78%	79%
	STRONGLY	65%	64%	62%	60%
Funding research on gun safety policies	SUPPORT	71%	61%	57%	65%
	STRONGLY	50%	40%	38%	40%



Source: Poll via telephone of 800 Pennsylvania likely voters, conducted June 11-19, by GS Strategy Group for Third Way. Margin of error +/- 3.46%.



Even when pressed with arguments from opponents of red flag laws, support held strong, with 64% of voters saying they side with supporters of the policy change.

Pennsylvania voters would reward lawmakers who advance these proposals.

A majority of Pennsylvania voters (54%) said they would be more likely to vote for Senator Toomey if he voted in favor of reforms like red flag laws, raising the age requirement for semi-automatic weapons, and expanding background check requirements. Only 26% said they would be less likely to support him if he voted for these kinds of proposals.

Conclusion

The framework under discussion in the Senate contains a package of reforms that are overwhelmingly supported by Pennsylvanians. These legislative components, particularly red flag laws, have been proven to save lives by keeping deadly weapons out of the hands of dangerous people. Pennsylvania voters agree that now is the time for Congress to act and pass gun reforms that will make our communities safer.

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ENDNOTES

1. Poll via telephone of 800 Pennsylvania likely voters, conducted June 11-19, by GS Strategy Group for Third Way. Margin of error $\pm 3.46\%$.