

New Mexico State Senator Pete Campos Issues Statement on Senate Bill 5, “Extreme Risk Firearm Protection Order Act”

It is both a great honor and tremendously humbling to serve seven counties and the diverse communities within them as a state senator. Traveling the district, meeting with constituents and constantly educating myself on their needs and the issues they face is the most rewarding and fulfilling task that I do, and I take this job very seriously. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve people throughout northeast New Mexico. Above all other issues, the health, safety and well-being of every community member is always at the forefront of my mind and in my heart.

Years ago, in a letter to constituents, I wrote that there can be no debate on whether government's top job is to protect its citizens from harm. Whether at the national, state or the local level, government's goal must be to prevent people who would do us harm from carrying out their plans, punish them when they are caught and help their victims recover.

We must always seek ways to provide for the safety and well-being of every individual, particularly the most vulnerable among us. And there are many tools with which to do so: providing broad-based behavioral health services, correctional programs focused on reducing recidivism, supporting our law enforcement with the resources and training they need to help keep people safe, and passing laws that protect individuals from doing grave harm to themselves or others. With that in mind, today I voted in support of the Extreme Risk Firearm Protection Order Act.

Every piece of legislation we consider requires deep thought and careful consideration. The laws we pass impact lives and yes, sometimes have the potential to cause conflict with deeply-rooted traditions and ways of life. I recognize this, and when I see and hear peoples' concerns on such issues I work even harder to bring people together to listen to their questions and help educate them on the intricacies of the legislation. In this particular case, a common concern expressed to me has been the protection of people's constitutional right to bear arms and right to due process. Like many in my community, I am a gun owner. I honor and respect this right, and I will defend it. And I believe in due process. In reviewing the language in this bill and debating it on the floor today I have concluded that this legislation keeps those rights firmly intact while providing an additional (and important) tool that stands to prevent harm from coming to families and individuals. Put simply, this legislation may very well save lives.

My life is focused on the work that lifts up, strengthens, and supports constituents. Bringing people together is my mission, and when issues divide us, I dig deep, working humbly and with my whole heart to bring compassion to the conversation and understanding to the table. My love for people inspires and drives me to respect and listen to all involved while remaining patient with and open to lengthy discussions and multi-faceted issues. I will always welcome dialog with the people I serve as we work to make New Mexico the safe and welcoming place we all cherish so dearly.