

**OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY**  
John J. Choi, County Attorney



360 Wabasha Street North, Suite 100, Saint Paul, MN 55102-1432  
Telephone 651-266-3222 Fax 651-266-3010

**NEWS RELEASE**

November 7, 2024

Contact: Dennis Gerhardstein, 651 421-0365

**Ramsey County Attorney Announces New Countywide  
ERPO Protocols and Staff Investment**

*Over 150 professionals attend the training.*

Saint Paul, MN – The Ramsey County Attorney’s Office (RCAO) convened over 150 stakeholders on new countywide protocols, procedures, and staff investment to maximize use of Minnesota’s new Extreme Risk Protect Order (“ERPO” or a/k/a “Red Flag”) Law. The ERPO law, effective this year, creates civil law tools to obtain a court-ordered surrender of firearms in certain dangerous situations where lives are at stake. Minnesota is the 20th state in the nation to enact this type of legislation.

“In Ramsey County, we see the new law that allows a judge to temporarily remove a firearm from an individual in dangerous and extreme situations as a valuable public safety tool. It’s clear to me that being intentional and serious about using this new public safety tool is the first step. I am grateful that leaders in Ramsey County are all on the same page and we are pulling in the same direction as evidenced by the turnout at today’s convening and training on our new policies, procedures, and protocols to identify extreme risk situations and pursue judicial orders in appropriate circumstances to protect the public. I look forward to reporting back to the public in the coming years on our progress to keep people safe from gun violence.”

Extreme Risk Protection Orders can protect household members from self-harm or harm to others as well as intervene to prevent potential mass shootings. Those who can file an ERPO include a family or household member, a chief law enforcement officer, a city or county attorney or a guardian.

“We are encouraged by the interagency cooperation here in Ramsey County, as well as throughout the State of Minnesota, to put the ERPO law into regular practice,” said Minnesota Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson. “To put this new law into practice, it is critical that law enforcement, those in the judicial system, family members and all those who play a part in filing ERPO requests have the proper guidance and support to ensure our families and communities are truly safe during moments of need.”

County Attorney Choi is assigning an experienced Senior Assistant County Attorney, Dawn Bakst, to coordinate and support ERPO training, policy, and implementation throughout the county. Law enforcement agencies sending cases to the office will indicate if an ERPO may be appropriate, and the office will determine if the situation meets the burden of proof for an ERPO

and will act as the petitioner. The Office will also support agencies with ERPO filing in situations outside of a criminal incident or investigation when requested and appropriate.

“The ERPO has the potential to be an important tool to for our officers, and others, who deal with people with firearms and threats on a daily basis,” said Saint Paul Police Chief Axel Henry. “This only works with the support and participation of the RCAO and the Saint Paul City Attorney’s Office. This is an additional tool for us, and others to create greater safety of our community members.”

The Ramsey County Attorney’s Office [Extreme Risk Protection Order webpage](#) provides additional information, including an FAQ section.

---

Note: Contact Dennis Gerhardstein for additional information.