



## HB 909 by Gervin-Hawkins: “Firearm Safety Awareness Month” - OPPOSE

Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Hearing, 3/15/21

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### Explanation of the bill:

- Establishes June as “Firearm Safety Awareness Month” to “increase awareness of firearm safety and encourage community residents and leaders to discuss the safe and responsible ownership, storage, and use of firearms...”

### Notes:

- “Firearm safety” and “responsible gun ownership” are terms that are being co-opted by those who want to propagate a message that guns are dangerous, serve no valuable purpose, and (if owned at all) should be kept locked up where even the owner doesn’t have access
- This notion completely disregards the fact that, as stated by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit in *Duncan v. Becerra* (August 2020), “an average of 657 Americans — and perhaps up to 6,849 Americans — use guns to defend themselves every single day of the year.” ([cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2020/08/14/19-55376.pdf](https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2020/08/14/19-55376.pdf), p. 40).
- In reality, for gun owners, every month is gun safety month. And for us, gun safety means that we treat every gun as if it’s loaded, we always keep the muzzle in a safe direction, we keep our finger off the trigger until our sights are on the target and we are ready to fire, and we are sure of our target and what is beyond it.
- Gun safety also means that we keep our firearms with us – where we can have access to them. We train regularly. We are ready to protect ourselves.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) under Obama noted in 2013 that defensive gun use by crime victims is a common occurrence. It found consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies. ([nap.edu/read/18319/chapter/3#16](https://nap.edu/read/18319/chapter/3#16))
- The study estimated that annual defensive gun uses range from about 500,000 to more than 3 million – that's over 8,000 Americans using guns to defend themselves every single day, in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008.
- If the goal was to encourage Texans to stay safe, legislators should be promoting defensive gun use awareness so Texans understand that firearms ownership and carry can dramatically increase personal safety. You’d encourage community residents and leaders to discuss the need for safe and responsible ownership of, training with, and carry of firearms. You’d honor those who have saved their lives and others’ because they were prepared to be their own first defenders.
- This bill does not accomplish that purpose.