



Testimony Opposing SB 11 by GOA Texas Director Rachel Malone

NOTE: This testimony was given to a Texas Legislative committee in 2019. The Legislature passed SB 11 in 2019. Because the bill has already passed, the Legislature is not considering whether to pass it. Instead, the Legislature is asking about its implementation and impact. See <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/schedules/html/C4202022062310001.HTM>.

SB 11 has six issues that relate to GOA members' concern of their firearms freedom.

- First, the **Threat Assessment Teams**.
 - SB 11 would mandate that schools instruct teachers, staff, and students in how to identify a threat. The standards are open-ended. Schools are instructed to utilize resources from the Texas School Safety Center. This Center's current resources include suggestive statements identifying legal gun possession as a potential threat. That's a problem.
 - There is no problem with anyone — a child or otherwise — who is exhibiting criminal behavior being investigated and prosecuted for that. But there's concerned that the open-endedness of this language may increase the stigmatizing of firearms & other defensive tools — that's a problem since guns are used far more times to protect innocent life than to harm it
 - Also want to be sure that kids who are legally in possession of pocketknives — which they can generally have at schools — aren't targeted for perfectly legal and safe behavior
- Psychiatric solutions — over-medicating that could lead to increased violence
 - These proposals focus on psychiatric treatment — but they don't recognize that psychiatric drugs may actually make these individuals MORE violent instead of less. This leads to the conclusion that modern mental health treatment may be a very WRONG solution for reducing violence.
 - Experts say that it is very difficult — perhaps impossible — to accurately predict future violence. Yet these proposals are based around being able to make these predictions!
- Creates “Mental health” records on kids' files — needlessly hindering gun purchases (in currently unknown ways) for these kids when they get older. The bottom line on this is we don't know what effect it will have — but as you've heard, with the predictions being unreliable and childhood diagnoses being nebulous.



- Registry of approved safety professionals — Current law adds people to a registry but stipulates that these are not endorsed and they are not the only ones who may be qualified — that’s a much better approach. In this bill, the Texas School Safety Center is taking responsibility to certify professionals, only those people can be used to satisfy requirements; risky, liability, could miss things, could fail to include helpful people.
- Open-ended — can and will be used against gun owners, even if that is not the current intent or understanding
 - Even if the legislative intent is pure, and even if the legislature wouldn’t dream of a law being used nefariously against gun owners, an open-ended law can always be interpreted in a hostile way that marginalizes populations such as gun owners.
- Taxpayer funded — way too much of our money spent on unproven or even negative solutions

Press Statement Opposing SB 11 by GOA Texas Director Rachel Malone

NOTE: This statement was delivered to media in 2019 as part of a joint press conference with a coalition of organization opposing SB 11. It explains the potential long-term issues with passage of SB 11. The Legislature subsequently passed SB 11.

Firearms are a valuable tool. Stigmatizing firearm ownership & safe, legal use of gun is wrong, and it’s dangerous. A gun is a useful defensive tool. My gun gives me a fighting chance at saving my life — or maybe yours. Guns are a tool. They are one of many tools that can be used for good or for evil, but in the hands of civilians, guns are used so much more often to protect innocent life than to harm it.

Don’t look to the nanny state to keep you safe. Their solution is to spread a wider net of control over your behavior. But evil will always exist, and all the government control in the world can’t stop it. The most effective legislative solution would be to repeal restrictions on law-abiding citizens carrying guns. Government needs to get the heck out of our lives and start respecting our personal responsibility of protecting ourselves.

Gun Owners of America stands firmly behind individual rights. That means we believe in limited government, we stand against unlawful searches and seizures, we honor property rights, and we work to uphold your Constitutional right to keep and bear arms in defense of yourself and



your liberty. We will never compromise on those beliefs. And the legislature had better take note.

First, the **Threat Assessment Teams**. SB 11 and other bills would mandate that schools instruct teachers, staff, and students in how to identify a threat. The standards are open-ended. Schools are instructed to utilize resources from the Texas School Safety Center. This Center's current resources include suggestive statements identifying legal gun possession as a potential threat. That's a problem.

In addition, compounding this problem, multiple bills seek to **stigmatize and marginalize gun ownership**. They are blatant attempts to paint the image that people who own guns, or shoot them, or carry them, or have them in their cars are atypical, may be prone to violence, and should be viewed with suspicion. They want to control the way you think about guns, and that's wrong.

They also want even more control over **firearms ownership**. Texas already has a long list of people who may not possess firearms — some legislators would like to see that extended to include people who have been assigned fiduciaries to manage their affairs. Nationwide, this category would cover more than a quarter of a million military veterans.

So here's why all of this is such a problem.

- It violates due process to take away guns when there's not even probable cause of a crime. This is far too low of a threshold for removal of a Constitutional right.
- These proposals focus on psychiatric treatment — but they don't recognize that psychiatric drugs may actually make these individuals MORE violent instead of less. This leads to the conclusion that modern mental health treatment may be a very WRONG solution for reducing violence.
- Experts say that it is very difficult — perhaps impossible — to accurately predict future violence. Yet these proposals are based around being able to make these predictions!
- Even if the legislative intent is pure, and even if the legislature wouldn't dream of a law being used nefariously against gun owners, an open-ended law can always be interpreted in a hostile way that marginalizes populations such as gun owners.

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