

TEXAS DEMOCRATS

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Texas Democrats Demand Gun Safety Reforms Before the Adjournment of the 88th Legislative Session

AUSTIN, Texas -- Today, following yesterday's horrific mass shooting in Allen, and another just days ago in San Jacinto County, the Texas Democratic Party is again calling on Texas Republicans to allow for common sense gun safety measures to be implemented in Texas.

We support the Second Amendment – and we also believe that the best way to uphold Texas' strong heritage of responsible gun ownership for self defense, hunting, and recreation is to make sure we're keeping **firearms out of the hands of criminals and others deemed dangerous to themselves and others**. It's long past time to implement these life-saving, science-backed tactics – small differences in the law that would make enormous strides toward preventing suicides, mass shootings, tragic accidents, and other gun violence.

The policies we are asking to be implemented would in no way infringe upon the Second Amendment – they would have no bearing on the ability of any law-abiding Texan of sound mind to purchase or own any federally-legal firearm. But they do have the potential to save countless lives of our fellow Texans.

Specifically, the Texas Democratic Party is demanding the following five measures are passed before the end of the 88th Legislative Session:

- 1. Universal, stringent, thorough background checks with no private sale – or “gun show” – loopholes.** In what is arguably the most common sense safety measure that has still to be implemented in Texas, we must have thorough background checks on every single individual purchasing a firearm.

Just this weekend, any individual – no matter their criminal background, or, yes, Republicans, even their immigration status – could have gone to the Mesquite Gun Show, a half-hour drive from the Allen Premium Outlets, and approached a table with a “Private Sale” sign and bought a gun with cash – no questions asked. We think that's wrong, and [87% of Americans agree with us](#).

- 2. Reasonable waiting periods to purchase a firearm.** [77% of all Americans agree](#) that there should be a 30-day waiting period for someone to be able to get a

gun. While we think 30 days may be too onerous and we defer to legislators on what the exact details of a waiting period should be in Texas, there's no question that even a small waiting period would be able to save lives – [studies show](#) that “Waiting period laws that delay the purchase of firearms by a few days can reduce gun homicides by approximately 17%.”

3. Raise the age to 21 to purchase any firearm in Texas. [76% of Texans agree](#) that to be able to buy a gun in Texas, you should be 21 years of age or older.

That statistic alone should be enough to sway Texas Republicans – but since it's not, let's describe why this is a common sense regulation: with the caveat that this is aged data (likely because of Republican efforts to hamstring gun violence research and data collection), according to the U.S. Department of Justice, “In 1996, 34,040 people in the United States were killed with guns. In 1997, **offenders age[d] 18, 19, and 20 ranked first, second, and third in the number of gun homicides committed.** Of all gun homicides where an offender was identified, 24 percent were committed by this age group, which is consistent with the historical pattern of gun homicides over the past 10 years.”

This is personal to us here in Texas: just last year, we saw an 18-year-old armed with an AR-15 walk into an elementary school and slaughter 19 kids and two teachers.

We as a society have agreed that 18-year-olds aren't old enough to buy a beer. We've decided they aren't old enough to rent a car. We've even decided they aren't old enough to buy a handgun, right here in Texas. It's completely nonsensical that these individuals, often high schoolers, would be allowed, then, to buy a high-powered carbine designed for the battlefield.

The Texas Democratic Party is urgently asking all Texans to call **State Representative Ryan Guillen's** office at **(512)-463-0416** and implore him to allow [H.B. 2744](#) – the **#RaiseTheAge Act** by Rep. Tracy King of Uvalde – to receive a vote in the Select House Committee on Community Safety.

[H.B. 2744](#), or the **#RaiseTheAge Act**, would raise the minimum age in Texas to buy an assault rifle – that is, a semiautomatic rifle that is capable of accepting a detachable magazine and that has a caliber greater than .22 – from 18 to 21 years old. AR-15-style rifles, along with other types of long guns, would fall within these defined parameters.

Republican Rep. Ryan Guillen chairs the powerful Committee and has signaled that he is unwilling to even allow the **#RaiseTheAge Act** to receive a vote in the Committee, which would be a necessary hurdle for the bill to clear before it can receive a vote in the full Texas House of Representatives.

4. **Extreme Risk Protection Orders – a.k.a. a “Red Flag” Law.** [Nearly 3 in 4 Texans – 72% – agree](#) that we should be implementing extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs), a.k.a. a “Red Flag” law, here in Texas. Senator Roland Gutierrez has filed [S.B. 14](#), which would do just that.

ERPOs would be a simple and efficient way to ensure that if someone is expressing suicidal or homicidal ideation, we have the systems in place to be able to remove deadly weapons from that individual’s reach until they feel safe. [Research shows](#) that “in 32 percent of mass shootings with four or more people killed, the shooter exhibited dangerous warning signs before the shooting.”

5. **Strict requirements for safe firearm storage.** Another common sense safety requirement that responsible gun owners universally agree upon is that guns should be kept safely secured away from those who shouldn’t have access to them.

And inadequate safe storage can prove fatal: [research shows](#) that “[i]n incidents of gunfire on school grounds, up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 got the gun from their home or the homes of friends or relatives.”

We support Sen. Gutierrez’s [S.B. 912](#), which would create criminal penalties for parents that do not safely store firearms in a locked safe.

Please note that not one single gun violence prevention measure listed above would do anything at all to restrict any type of non-NFA firearm or accessory from a law-abiding Texan of sound mind over the age of 21.

In addition, Texas Democrats have filed the following bills to help tackle gun violence in Texas, but Republicans are continuing to obstruct:

- [H.B. 22 \(Moody\)](#) – requires reporting if a single person buys multiple firearms or magazines within a 5-day period
- [H.B. 112 \(Howard\)](#) – works toward violence prevention in health facilities and workplaces
- [H.B. 165 \(A. Johnson\)](#) – increases criminal penalty for aggravated assault for an actor that commits the assault as part of a mass shooting
- [H.B. 220 \(Goodwin\)](#) – creates database for firearm transfers to determine if a license was previously suspended or revoked
- [H.B. 236 \(Goodwin\)](#) – requires NICS check for private firearm transfers
- [H.B. 544 \(Julie Johnson\)](#) – requires additional reporting for convicted domestic abusers trying to purchase firearms
- [H.B. 2242 \(Howard\)](#) – directs DPS and TxDOT to implement a plan to provide relevant info on safe storage of firearms for the DPS ‘Keep ‘Em Safe Texas’ Gun Storage campaign