





2023

Texas 88th Legislative Session Report




TEXAS
GUN SENSE

Message From Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As a valued supporter, our team is pleased to share our 88th Legislative Session Report with you.

We have been advocating for 10 years, and this was one of the most emotional experiences we've had. We began the session merely eight months after the unspeakable tragedy in Uvalde, and even as we sat in hearing rooms at the Capitol, we were forced to grapple with news of more shootings.

While it's truly appalling that state leaders refused to enact evidence-based gun safety policies despite pleas of Uvalde families and broad public support, we've always known that our mission requires incremental, long-term strategy and stamina.

Thanks to your support, we were able to move the needle and achieve progress: from expanding our coalition, pushing a bipartisan HB 2744 committee vote, and advancing safe gun storage education — our work had an impact.

And there is so much more work to do.

That's why we need your ongoing support, whether that means joining us for rallies, testifying in hearings, or donating to sustain our advocacy at the Legislature and in our communities.

We invite you to read this full report, which serves as your guide on the legislative session and the work ahead. Thank you for remaining dedicated advocates.

Nicole Golden, MSSW
Executive Director, Texas Gun Sense



We knew from the beginning that we would face challenges, but we went into the session in January with renewed energy to stand together with the families from Uvalde to demand change. We promised that we would fight to prevent the next shooting, and we followed through on that promise.

Supporters Took Action

Together, we raised our voices at the Capitol, online, and in the media. Supporters sent thousands of emails to lawmakers this session, urging them to take action. Your commitment and participation was instrumental in driving progress forward.

16

Coalition
meetings
held

1,300+

New
followers on
social media

367%

Increase in
social media
engagement

50+

Media
appearances

170+

New
volunteers

28,233

Emails sent to lawmakers through our
action alerts

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TX LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT 2023

Safe Gun Storage Victory

"If more Texans practiced safe gun storage, my daughter would be alive today."

**–Rhonda Hart,
mother of Kim, a
victim of the Santa
Fe shooting.**

For years, we have led efforts to expand safe gun storage education, because we know that securely storing firearms can prevent unintentional shootings, suicides, and school shootings like the 2018 attack at Santa Fe High School in Texas, where a 17 year-old used his father's rifle to murder 10 people and injure 13 more.

This session, we worked with Representative Dutton to successfully add a measure to a school safety bill (HB 3) requiring school districts to educate parents about the importance of safe gun storage and child access prevention.

Doctors, parents, educators and more overwhelmingly supported this effort.

After years of advocating for stronger gun storage measures, this is a **MAJOR SUCCESS!** — and it will save lives.

Championing Good Bills

Through testimony, working with lawmakers, and mobilizing supporters, we helped to pass some common sense policies.

- **HB 1** - We shaped the state budget to advance gun safety by working with Representative Howard to add funding for the Keep 'Em Safe, Texas safe gun storage education campaign.
- **HB 165 (Johnson, Ann)** - We supported increasing accountability for perpetrators who injure individuals in a mass shooting.
- **SB 435 (Middleton)** - We supported Santa Fe families in their ask to allow survivors and victims access to evidence even if a case has not gone to trial.
- **HB 671 (González)** - We advocated for an initiative to create a veteran suicide awareness campaign.
- **SB 728 (Huffman)** - We supported bipartisan legislation to require the state to report mental health records for 16-18 year olds into the federal background check system, closing a critical loophole.
- In addition to the above, we successfully sent bills from the House to the Senate that would protect domestic violence victims and prevent straw purchases. Next session, we will work to move these bills to final passage.

State leaders disregarded several key gun safety policies, choosing not to hear bills that would establish an Extreme Risk Protection Order ("red flag law") and an Office of Violence Prevention. Community Safety Committee Chairman Ryan Guillen did not put legislation by Rep. Goodwin to require background checks on private gun sales to a vote — a measure supported by 80% of Texans. We will continue to advocate for these policies that are proven to save lives.

Advocating to Raise the Age

Several lawmakers joined us in advocating for this bill all session long:

Senator Roland Gutierrez

Representative Vikki Goodwin

Representative Joe Moody

Representative Rhetta Andrews Bowers

Representative Jarvis Johnson

Representative John Bryant

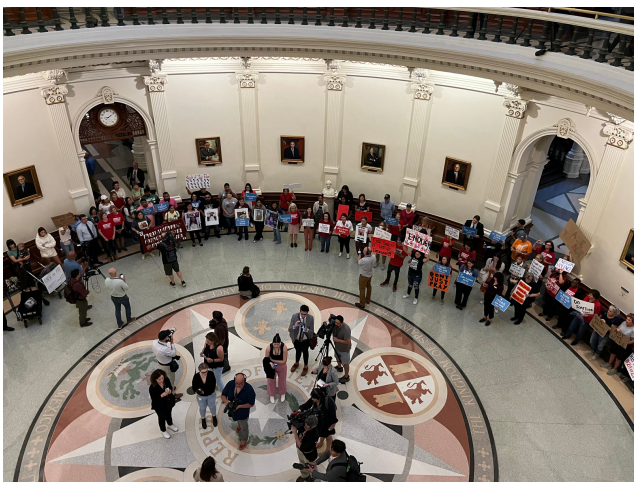
This session, we worked tirelessly to pass HB 2744 by Representative Tracy King to raise the age from 18 to 21 to purchase semi-automatic rifles like the AR-15 used to murder 21 children and educators in Uvalde.

Working side-by-side with survivors, gun owners, and Texans across the state, we testified and drove thousands of calls, emails, and visits to key lawmakers.

Our efforts advanced a bipartisan 8-5 committee vote for HB 2744 — an unprecedented victory for the gun safety movement in Texas.

It is beyond reproach that state leaders refused to send this bill to the House floor for a vote despite the will of 76% of Texas voters.

While there is a lot of work ahead, we do not feel defeated. We will continue to advocate for this legislation in 2025 with even more support and energy behind us.



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TX LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT 2023

Fighting Bad Bills

Despite relentless work with our partners, the Legislature approved some harmful firearms measures.

- » **HB 3 (Burrows)** - Includes a mandate for armed guards at all K-12 schools. Research shows that at best, armed personnel will fail to prevent school shootings and at worst, unintentionally harm students. Because of pressure from our supporters, this provision was initially removed from the bill. However, lawmakers added it back into the bill before the final vote.
- » **SB 599 (Birdwell)** - Allows district or country clerks to carry handguns in courthouses
- » **HB 1229 (Slawson)** - Allows retired judges to carry firearms in prohibited places
- » **HB 1760 (Hefner)** - Weakens standards for carrying guns at some locations of school events
- » **HB 2837 (Schaefer)** - Bans credit card companies and financial institutions from identifying firearms purchases that could assist with investigations
- » **HB 3137 (Isaac)** - Preemptively removes the ability for local government to require liability insurance or registration for gun owners

Lawmakers who weakened gun laws in spite of public opinion chose partisanship and special interests over the safety of our families.

Bills We Defeated

- » **HB 175 (Schaefer)** - Weaken accountability for individuals who carry guns in prohibited places
- » **HB 249 (Rogers)** - Create an armed volunteer school security program
- » **HB 636 (Patterson)** - Allow elections judges to carry firearms in polling places
- » **HB 1229 (Harris)** - Prevent child welfare agencies from asking foster parents for detailed information on firearms in the home
- » **HB 1894 (Cain)** - Preemptively prevent implementation and enforcement of Extreme Risk Protection Orders
- » **HB 2705 (Hayes)** - Allow possession and sales of short-barreled rifles, like that used in the Santa Fe shooting
- » **HB 2960 (Patterson)** - Weaken standards and accountability for individuals who carry firearms in prohibited locations
- » **HB 3138 (Isaac)** - Expand firearm carry reciprocity, allowing individuals from other states to carry guns in Texas public places
- » **HB 4007 (Slawson)** - Allow school marshals to openly carry firearms

45 anti-safety bills did not receive a hearing this session. 9 of 13 bills we opposed failed to pass.

Media Features

Throughout the session, we continued our strong presence in state and national media. We were featured by major news outlets and led multiple press conferences with our coalition to raise awareness of the gun violence crisis in Texas and advocate for change.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Rare GOP votes in Texas for gun bill after mass shootings

By Acacia Coronado and Paul J. Weber | AP
May 9, 2023 at 7:27 p.m. EDT

TIME

POLITICS • GUNS

Gun Control Had a Small Surprise Win After the Texas Mall Shooting. But Advocates Have Mixed Feelings

NATION

Uvalde Texas mass shooting [Add Topic +](#)

'Raise the age' gun bill passes Texas committee after months of advocacy by Uvalde families

 **Niki Griswold**
USA TODAY NETWORK

Published 3:05 p.m. ET May 8, 2023 | Updated 5:51 a.m. ET May 9, 2023

TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2023

After years of little progress, Texas gun control and safety advocates see some small openings for dialogue at the Capitol

Many bills that would limit access to firearms or ammunition likely won't become law anytime soon. But people who advocate at the Texas Capitol see emerging signs that there's appetite for finding some middle ground.

BY ALEJANDRO SERRANO APRIL 18, 2023 5 AM CENTRAL

Texas Majority to End Gun Violence: Advocacy Day



In February, we helped bring together 600 advocates and 30 organizations with partners including Moms Demand Action and Community Justice Action Fund to collectively call for common sense gun reform in our state. We heard from a diverse group of speakers including survivors, gun owners, veterans, students, and educators. Groups of volunteers and survivors met with every lawmaker in the Capitol. Our gun sense champions encouraged us to continue working hard to make our voices heard during the session — and we did!

IN APRIL, WE CONTINUED THE MOMENTUM AND TRAINED ADVOCATES ACROSS THE STATE ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE GUN SAFETY AT THE LEGISLATURE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER THESE TRAININGS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND INTO THE NEXT SESSION.

Community Outreach

OUR COALITION

This year, Texas Gun Sense collaborated with Black and Brown-led organizations, faith-based groups, educators, doctors, survivors, gun owners, and more. We added new organizations to our statewide Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence including Texas Impact, Texas American Federation of Teachers, and Texas Doctors for Social Responsibility. Together, we shaped the narrative in the media and deepened relationships and coordination among our 20 organizations.

We are immensely grateful to our partners for their collaboration and expertise. Our impact is stronger when we work together.

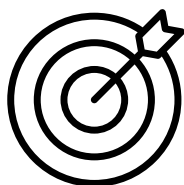
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to our Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator Jesse Woche, we have established partnerships with students to engage young people and support them in using their voices. By building stronger relationships, we can create a more inclusive and effective movement for ending gun violence in Texas.



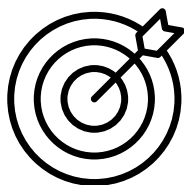
What's Next

We know that advocating to prevent gun violence requires long-term strategy and incremental progress. Even in the face of challenge, we will continue to advocate for common sense gun safety policies until they become law. These include background checks on all gun sales, an extreme risk protection order, raising the age to purchase semi-automatic rifles, and more.



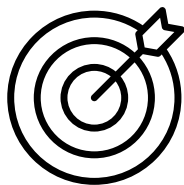
01. Work With Our Coalition

We will continue to expand our partnerships across the state and work together to push for change on a state and local level.



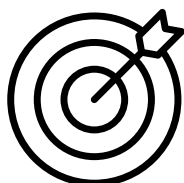
02. Hold Leaders Accountable

We will keep building a sustainable movement that educates voters and holds elected officials accountable for their actions on gun safety.



03. Educate the Public

We will continue raising awareness on solutions to prevent gun violence and the critical importance of safe gun storage and responsible practices.



04. Address the Root Causes of Gun Violence

We will work to reduce daily gun deaths due to interpersonal violence and firearm suicide by addressing root causes, including mental health crises, lack of access to vital resources, and unfettered access to firearms.



THANK YOU!

We are so grateful to our supporters. Whether you made phone calls, sent emails, attended events, or made a donation, your efforts have strengthened our mission to prevent gun violence. We could not have done this without you, and we encourage you to stay involved.

We will be sure to keep you up-to-date if special sessions include actions on gun safety.

Follow txgunsense.org, @txgunsense on Twitter and Facebook and @texasgunsense on Instagram to stay engaged!