

Texas Firearm Suicide Report



Introduction

Every Texan deserves to live free from the threat of gun violence and tragedy. The crisis of firearm suicide, which accounts for the majority of gun deaths, threatens the safety of our communities and especially of vulnerable Texans.

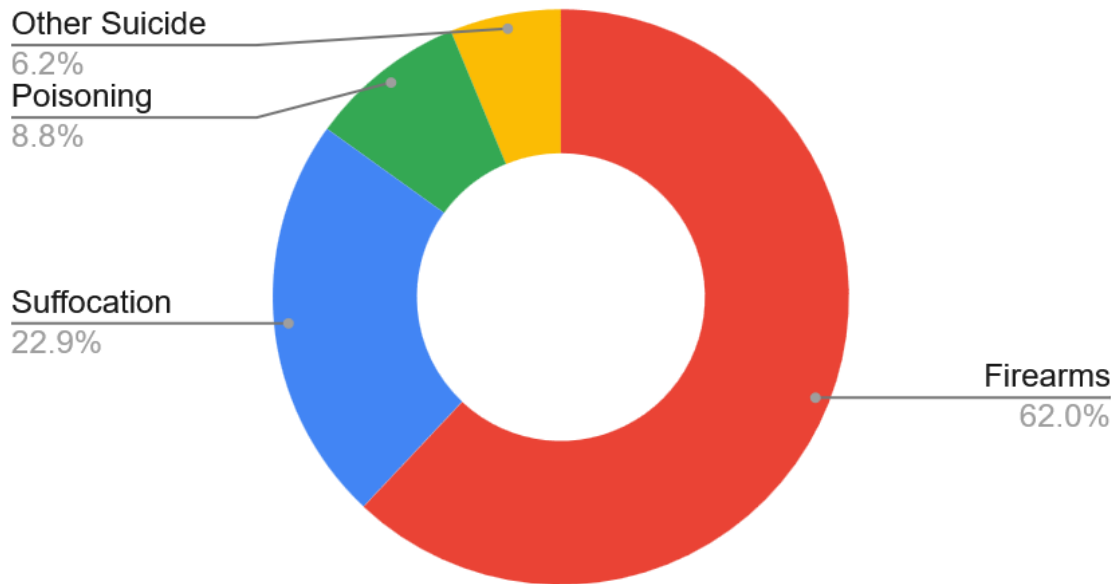
Seventy-four Americans on average die from firearm suicide every day (Brady United, n.d.). In Texas, almost 9 out of every 100,000 Texans died from firearm suicide in 2024, nearly double the number who died from firearm-related homicides (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026). While Texas has seen a reduction in gun homicides since the peak in 2021, tragically, the rate of firearm suicide in Texas has consistently increased year over year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026).

In Texas, firearms account for a disproportionate number of suicide deaths because they are most often lethal: 62% of suicide deaths occurred with a firearm compared with 10% of overall suicide attempts. Nine out of every 10 attempts involving a firearm result in death (NAMI Texas, 2025) (Veterans Administration). Seventy percent of people who survive their first suicide attempt will not attempt again, (Brady United) but the extremely high rate of lethality of a firearm does not offer people a second chance to rebuild their lives after a crisis.

The Burden is Not Evenly Distributed

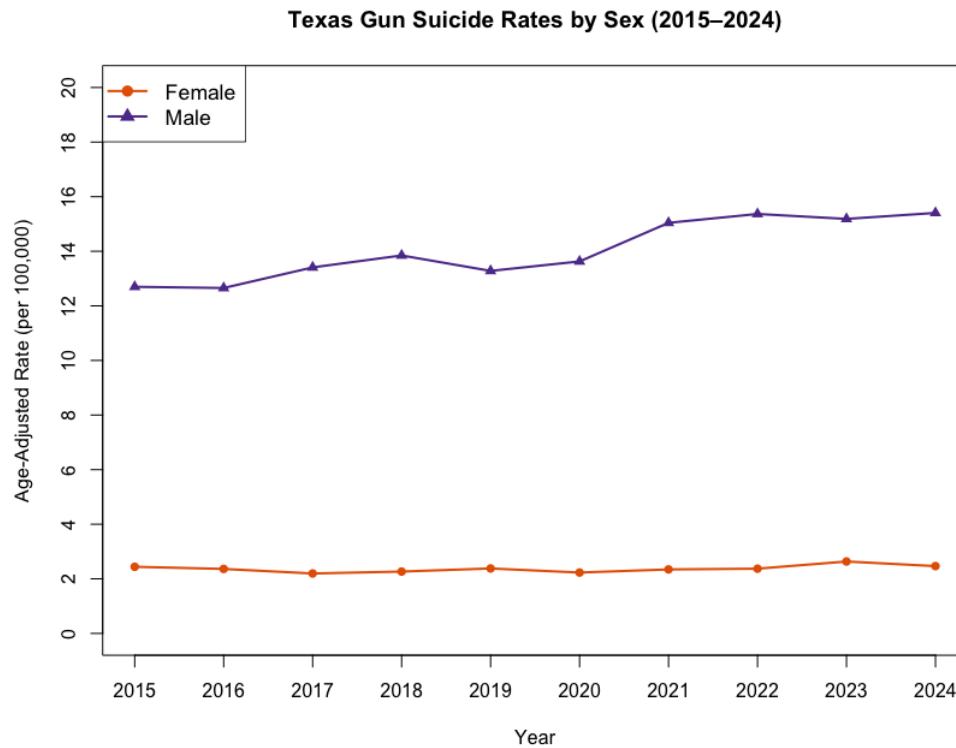
Firearm suicide impacts all Texans, but some communities are disproportionately affected. These disparities can overlap, with some Texans experiencing multiple factors associated with increased firearm suicide risk. Understanding these trends and the communities most affected is imperative to developing prevention strategies that can save lives across our state. The figure below showcases the disproportionate amount of suicides by firearms as compared to other means in Texas.

Total Deaths from Suicide in Texas (2023)



([Texas Veterans Suicide Data Sheet](#))

The rates of firearm suicide among men have been steadily increasing since 2018. In Texas, men and boys are more than seven times more likely to die from firearm suicide than women across all age groups, as of the most recent data from 2024 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026).



(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics)

However, in the US, adults over the age of 65 have an elevated risk for suicide due to factors such as isolation and difficulty managing health conditions (National Council on Aging, 2025). Texans over the age of 65 had the highest rate of firearm suicide between 2019 and 2024 of any age group in Texas (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026).

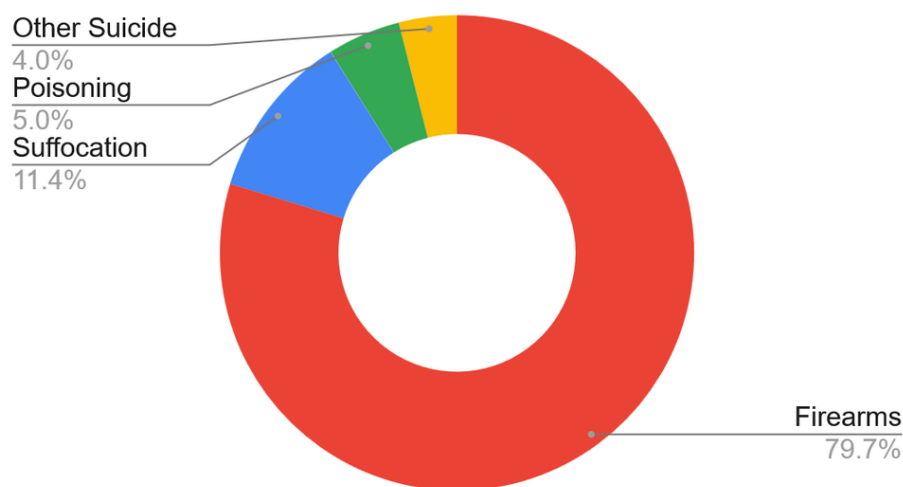
Age is a significant factor across the spectrum of those experiencing a mental health crisis. Tragically, suicide rates are increasing among children. The rates of firearm suicide have grown significantly among adolescents, especially those from non-white ethnic/racial groups, in the past decade (Orniston et al., 2024). Adolescents tend to use unsecured or easily accessible firearms from the homes of a family member or relative to end their lives (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2025). This upward trend in firearm suicide rates among children is deeply concerning.

Secure gun storage initiatives have the potential to significantly reduce youth firearm suicide and are a critical piece of a comprehensive suicide prevention plan.

Between 2019 and 2024, the rates of firearm suicide in rural areas increased by almost 17%, and remained consistently higher than rates in urban and suburban areas (Johns Hopkins 2024 Data). Rural areas have significantly less access to healthcare, including mental healthcare and veteran support services (Public Health Watch, 2026), which may contribute to disproportionately high instances of firearm suicide in these areas.

Firearms account for almost 80% of suicide deaths for Texas veterans, compared to 62% of suicides among Texans overall in 2023 (Veterans Administration). The veteran population has an elevated risk of suicide, and firearms are a common and consistently lethal means of death for veterans in crisis. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs found that rural veterans receiving their care have a 20% higher risk of dying by suicide in comparison to those in urban areas. This further highlights the increasing need to understand how overlapping risk factors play a role in developing prevention strategies.

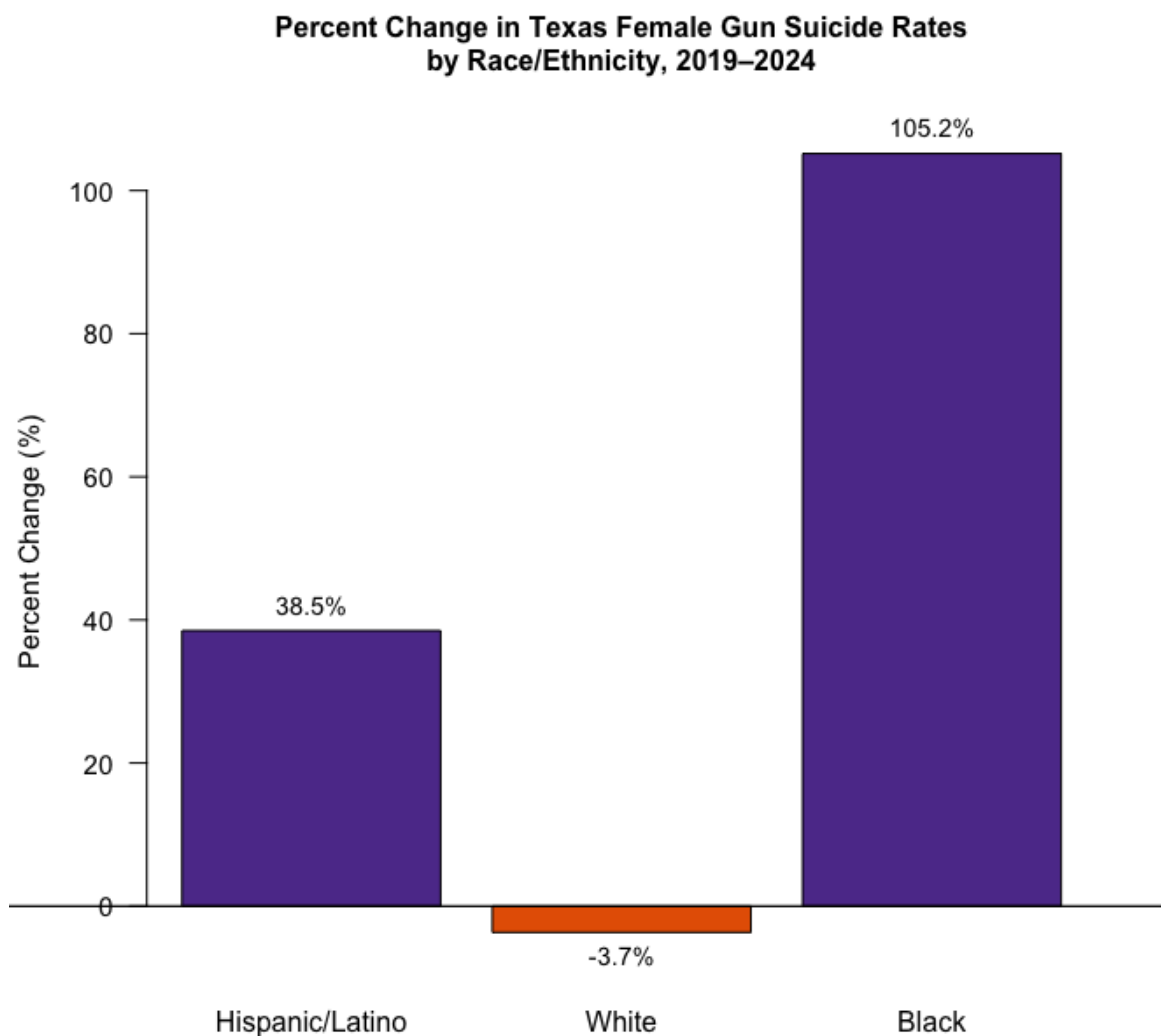
Veteran Deaths from Suicide in Texas (2023)



([Texas Veterans Suicide Data Sheet](#))

The rates of firearm suicide among Black and Hispanic/Latino Texans have been increasing since 2019 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026).

Nationally, between 2015 and 2024, the firearm suicide rate among Black women increased by 169%, the largest relative increase among women of different racial and ethnic groups (Johns Hopkins, 2026). During the same time period, the firearm suicide rate among Latina women increased by 57%, while the rate among Asian women increased by 51% (Johns Hopkins, 2026).



(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics)

Lastly, LGBTQ+ Texans, especially LGBTQ+ youth, are at an elevated risk for suicidality compared to the rest of the population. The Trevor Project finds that at least 36% of LGBTQ+ youth and 40% of trans and nonbinary young people seriously considered suicide in the past year (Trevor Project). More research is needed to establish rates of firearm suicide specifically; however, such high rates of suicidality within a single demographic warrants serious attention (Brady United).

As the burden continues to be uneven, developing prevention strategies cannot be one-size-fits-all. Texas' geographic landscape also affects how prevention reaches people, and we need to take into account for the differences in healthcare access, firearm access, age, and community context. Texas needs a strong foundation of infrastructure capable of reaching the populations experiencing the greatest burden.

No one should lose a loved one to firearm suicide, and Texas communities deserve immediate action to combat this crisis.

Texas' Firearm Suicide Prevention Infrastructure

Texas has several existing laws, programs, and community-based initiatives that can contribute to firearm suicide prevention. These efforts include laws and policies addressing safe firearm storage and education, statewide firearm safety initiatives, temporary firearm storage options, and broader suicide prevention and crisis response services. Together, these efforts provide a foundation for preventing firearm suicide, but their reach can be limited and it is unclear whether these services are effectively coming together to target the issue of firearm suicide prevention.

Safe Storage and Firearm Access

Safe storage and firearm access are at the forefront of firearm suicide prevention. Unfortunately, Texas does not require firearm owners to store unattended firearms in a certain way. Texas also does not require firearm purchases to include a locking

device to help prevent access and reduce the risk of firearm suicide during a crisis.

Texas has a Child Access Prevention (CAP) law that addresses children's access to firearms. The law applies when a child under 17 gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm. Criminal liability can apply when an adult, with criminal negligence, failed to secure the firearm or left it somewhere they knew or should have known the child could access it. This law only applies after a child gains access and does not require all gun owners to store firearms securely.

During the 86th Legislative Session, House Bill 1, the Appropriations Act, funded and directed the Department of Public Safety to establish and promote a statewide safe gun storage campaign, Keep 'Em Safe, Texas. This initiative educates Texans on safety, preparedness and responsible firearm storage practices.

House Bill 3, which became law during the 88th Legislative Session, was amended to require Independent School Districts (ISDs) across Texas to disperse material with information about safe gun storage to families. The following Legislative Session, House Bill 121 passed into law with language expanding this initiative. ISDs are now required to distribute the information three times a school year.

Temporary and Out-of-Home Storage

There is an emerging storage network beyond the home, however, not every community may have a provider depending on location. Out-of-home storage is an effective way of creating time and distance between a person in crisis and their firearm. In Texas, there are efforts to have options to temporarily remove firearms to retailers.

Pierce's Pledge focuses on the safety of children during custody disputes. The organization advocates for out-of-home storage where there are heightened safety concerns. Through their work, they have collected a comprehensive list of retailers across the nation that participate in offering temporary storage. Pierce's Pledge's interactive map allows families and individuals to easily find options in their areas if available, including 100 gun retailers in Texas (Pierce's Pledge).

In Louisiana, The Armory Project (TAP) brings together veterans, community leaders, public health professionals, researchers, and firearms instructors to address firearm suicide prevention. TAP works with firearm owners and community partners to connect people with resources and support, including options for temporary, out-of-home storage during periods of elevated risk. The organization also works with local retailers to expand access to these storage options. TAP currently has two participating locations in Texas.

The Target Safety Coalition led by Dr. Sandra McKay brings together veteran organizations, medical experts, gun stores, and gun safety advocates to expand out-of-home storage locations across the state (University of Texas McGovern Medical School, n.d.). With more funding and support, this growing ecosystem of interdisciplinary relationships holds promise for building bridges and reducing firearm suicides in Texas.

Suicide Prevention and Lethal Means Safety

Texas has a suicide prevention infrastructure which includes the 988 contact call centers. Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) are a key component of providing services to people in crisis throughout Texas. In collaboration with the Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative, they provide community members the Counseling on Access to Lethal Means. This is an evidence-based suicide prevention program that teaches how to safely reduce a person's access to lethal methods like firearms and medications during a crisis (Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative).

There are community partners that provide peer support groups and programming supporting suicide prevention such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP). The Department of Veteran Affairs provides suicide prevention and crisis support for veterans, a population experiencing a higher burden of firearm suicide. Texas also has a dedicated crisis line for farmers, ranchers, and rural community members, providing a crisis resource tailored to these communities. Together, these existing systems provide opportunities to incorporate lethal means safety into suicide

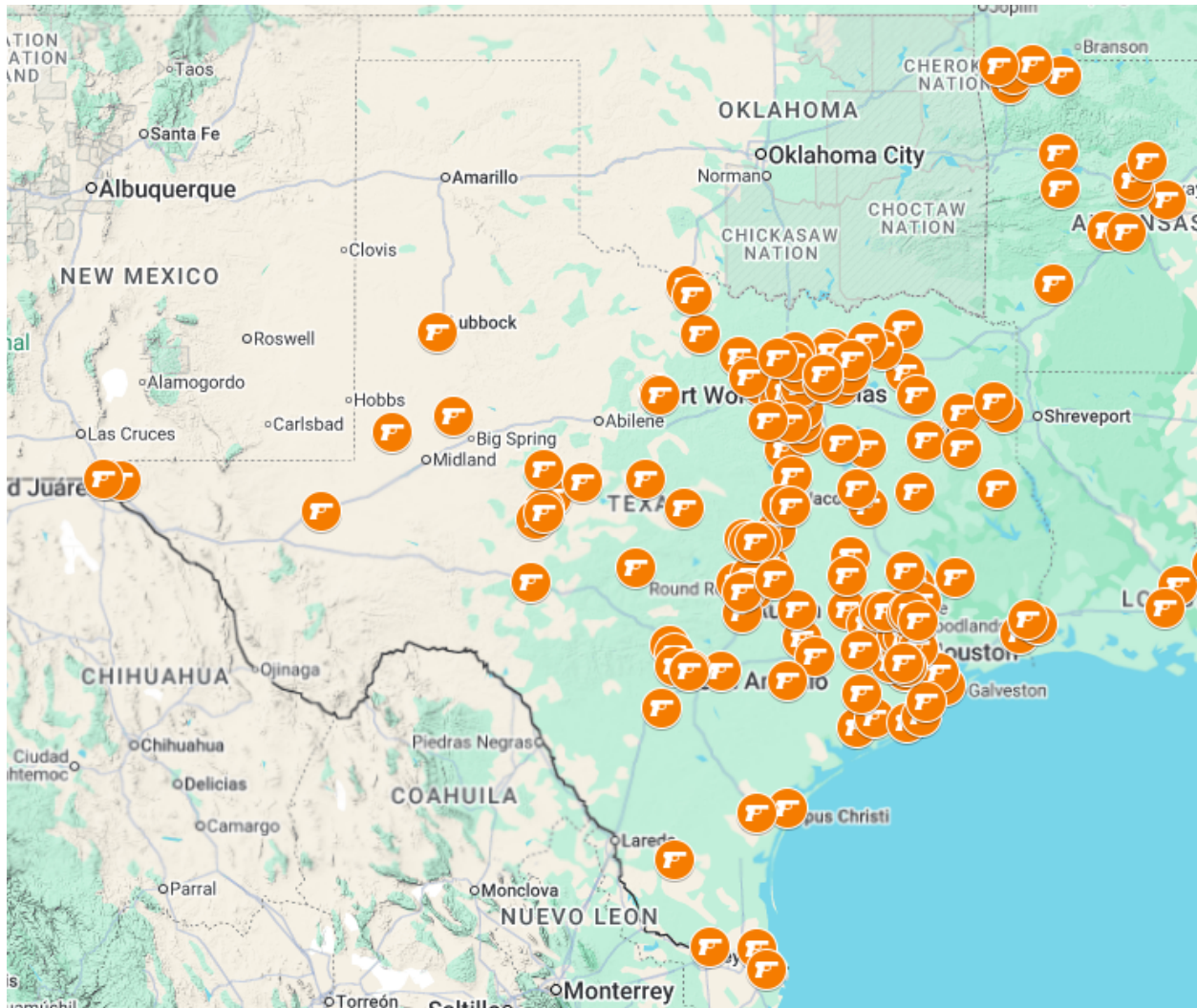
prevention and connect people at-risk with resources that can help reduce access to firearms during a crisis.

Where Gaps Remain

Texas has some measures encouraging safe storage, but there is no baseline established for storage requirements for all firearm owners. Texas has a limited circumstance-specific requirement within the CAP law, but not a universal storage standard for firearm owners. State requirements involving DPS and ISDs focus on education about safe storage rather than establishing a storage requirement for firearm owners. Education is not the same as requiring safe and secure storage. This leaves it up to each firearm owner's discretion and responsibility to purchase and safely secure their firearms in their homes and vehicles. Without a universal safe storage law or vehicle storage law, Texas will continue to have no consistent requirement designed to create time and distance between a person in crisis and firearm access.

There is no requirement to secure firearms in vehicles under Texas law. Texas law does not adequately address firearms kept in vehicles that can be easily accessible to a person in crisis, even if firearms inside the home are securely stored. Vehicle storage creates a separate access point that isn't addressed by Texas' existing safe storage framework.

Out-of-home storage creates time and distance when a person is in crisis. Even when someone recognizes that a firearm should temporarily be separated from a person at elevated risk, access to temporary storage is not consistently available statewide. Pierce's Pledge shows there is an existing network of participating retailers, but that network is geographically uneven. Rural communities face both less access to participating storage locations and a higher firearm suicide burden.



([Interactive Map of Pierce's Pledge Gun Safe Storage](#))

Policy Recommendations

Safe Storage

Recent research on child access prevention policies tells a hopeful story: when enforced, these laws can reduce youth firearm suicide deaths by up to 14% (Johns Hopkins, Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2025).

Research from Johns Hopkins has shown only half of firearm owners actually store their firearms safely (Johns Hopkins, Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2023).

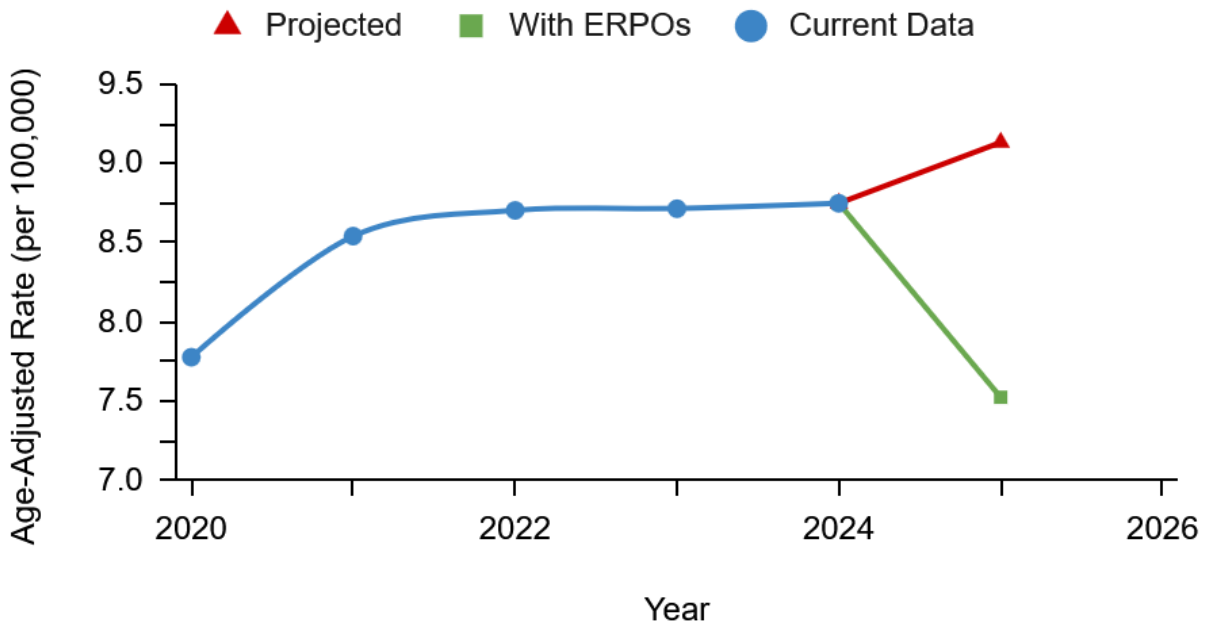
Adopting effective secure gun storage policies and implementing them with clear guidance, public awareness and enforcement can prevent deaths from firearm suicide. Three measures that Texas lawmakers should adopt laws that strengthen firearm access prevention, which include:

- 1) Secure storage in homes:** require secure storage of firearms by gun owners.
- 2) Secure storage in vehicles:** require secure storage of all unattended firearms by gun owners in vehicles to reduce theft.
- 3) Enhance CAP law:** strengthening the existing child-access framework.

ERPOs

Extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) or “red-flag laws,” are measures which can temporarily remove firearms and pause any new gun purchases. These laws are designed to allow people who see the warning signs of self-harm in a loved one to petition a court to temporarily remove a firearm in order to avert a potential tragedy. Twenty one other states and Washington D.C. have enacted extreme risk laws (Texas Gun Sense) (Giffords Law Center, 2020) though as of 2025, Texas law prohibits ERPOs, even threatening a felony jail sentence to any entity including law enforcement who would seek to implement an out-of-state ERPO.

Firearm Suicide Rates in Texas



(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics)

Extreme risk laws are both effective and broadly-supported. Long-term research conducted in Indiana and Connecticut concluded that extreme risk laws decreased the firearm suicide rate by 7.5-14% for the period they were enacted (Giffords Law Center, 2020). A majority of Texans from all political parties support allowing judges to enact ERPOs to temporarily separate guns from people who pose a risk to themselves or others (University of Houston Hobby School, 2022). Given their popular, bipartisan support and the chance that they could save almost 400 lives (Giffords Law Center, 2020) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026), there is strong evidence to support the benefits of implementing extreme risk laws in Texas.

Based on this data, Texas should repeal the ban on ERPOs and adopt a comprehensive ERPO to prevent firearm suicides and homicides in our state.

Conclusion

Firearm suicide is an urgent and preventable public health crisis. Reducing firearm suicide in Texas will require a comprehensive approach that combines evidence-based policy, community partnerships, education, and investments in mental health and suicide prevention. The Texas Legislature should implement stronger firearm access protections, including safe storage, vehicle storage, strengthen CAP laws, and ERPOs.

Texas Gun Sense is committed to working alongside communities, researchers, healthcare providers, firearm owners, and policymakers to advance these lifesaving solutions. Together, we can save lives, strengthen our communities and build a safer Texas.

Firearm suicide is an urgent crisis we can and must address. Texas Gun Sense is committed to raising awareness, mobilizing partnerships and resources, and leading policy efforts to prevent firearm suicide in our state. Together, we can protect our communities and families and ensure all Texans can thrive.

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