



90th Session Policy and Advocacy Agenda

Texas Gun Sense is committed to reducing gun violence through nonpartisan, evidence-backed advocacy. As the only statewide gun violence prevention organization specifically created by and for Texans, we are an expert voice on strategies to reduce gun deaths, leveraging thought leadership, education, and coalition building to move the needle with policymakers and the public. Our goal is to reduce all forms of gun violence, including mass shootings, suicide, and interpersonal violence.

According to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC's) most recent data, **4,389 Texans** were shot and killed in 2024, and **gun violence costs Texas \$48.1 billion a year.**¹ While gun violence impacts every Texan, several vulnerable communities are disproportionately impacted. For example, firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States and in Texas.² Further, while Black males ages 15-34 make up 2% of the population, they accounted for nearly 22% of all gun homicide deaths in 2024.³

Tragically, Texas has experienced some of the most high-profile mass shootings in recent history. Firearms are also a major factor in suicide completion and family violence homicides, and these tragedies occur too frequently in Texas.

Against this backdrop, **support for responsible gun laws in Texas is high:** 96% of Texas voters, including 88% of Republican voters, support background checks for all gun buyers, and 97% agree that judges should be empowered to remove guns from people who poses a threat to themselves or others, including 81% of Republican voters.⁴ In short, Texans understand and appreciate that we can reduce gun violence without sacrificing the right of law-abiding citizens to responsibly own a gun.

Texas Gun Sense advocates for gun violence prevention at the local, state, and federal levels year-round. The 90th legislative session is a particularly important opportunity to advance our mission.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death. Age-adjusted Gun Deaths and Rates per 100,000. WONDER Online Database, 1999-2024; & WISQARS. National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) and Cost of Injury Modules, 2023-2024. Data Collected: April 2026

²Ibid

³Ibid

⁴<https://www.uh.edu/hobby/tx2025/issues2025.pdf>



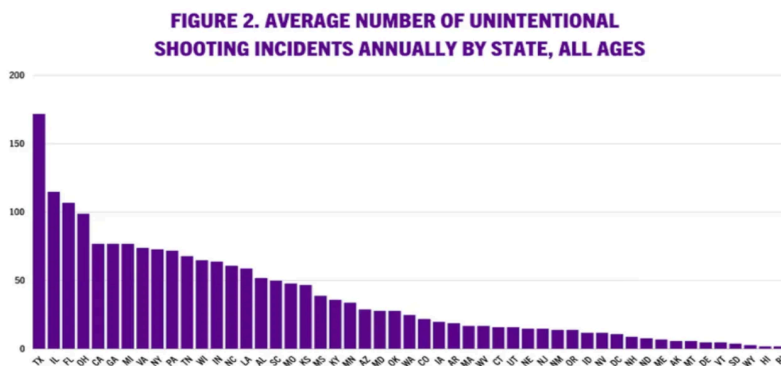
During the 90th legislative session, Texas Gun Sense will prioritize preventing firearm violence, suicide and other tragedies through secure gun storage, promoting responsible firearm ownership, strengthening firearm safety requirements for young adults, and defending against gun safety rollbacks. We will advance comprehensive, evidence-based policy solutions informed by national research as well as tailored approaches and opportunities unique to Texas. Our strategy is to advocate for incremental progress toward stronger gun safety laws, exploring every available solution to prevent gun violence and save lives.

Texas Gun Sense Policy Priorities for the 90th Legislative Session

1. Expand secure gun storage requirements and educational initiatives

Access to unsecured firearms is a significant contributor to unintentional shootings, suicides, school shootings, and theft.

In 2024, **262 young Texans ages 1-17** were shot and killed. Across the country, states with weak gun laws and higher levels of gun ownership typically have a higher number of unintentional shootings annually than states with stronger gun laws. Texas has a high rate of gun ownership and the highest number of unintentional shootings perpetrated by children on average. From 2018-2025, the average annual unintentional shootings perpetrated by Texas children was 15.5. A 2023 article from the CDCI found that approximately three-quarters of fatal unintentional shootings among children involved an unlocked and loaded firearm.⁵



The mass shooting at Santa Fe High School in 2018 and other threats to school safety further highlight the urgent need to prevent teens from accessing a gun that was not properly stored.

⁵ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7250a1.htm?s_cid=mm7250a1_w



The Texas Education Agency reports **276 student disciplinary actions for firearm violations** in the 2024-2025 school year.⁶ Nationally, seventy-six percent of school shooters obtain their firearm from a parent or the home of a relative.⁷

Firearms are also a leading contributor to suicide in Texas, accounting for the majority of completed suicides. Firearm suicide constitutes the majority of firearm deaths: of the 4,389 total gun deaths in Texas in 2024, **2,779 were suicides**. In Texas, men and boys are more than seven times more likely to die from firearm suicide than women across all age groups.

Firearm suicide rates have also increased significantly among adolescents, who may access unsecured or easily accessible firearms from the homes of parents or relatives during a crisis. Secure storage can create critical time and distance between a person in crisis and a loaded firearm. Research shows that when enforced, child access prevention policies can reduce youth firearm suicide deaths by up to 14%.⁸ Yet only about half of firearm owners report storing their firearms safely, demonstrating the need for both effective requirements and continued public education.

Firearm access is not limited to the home. Firearms left unsecured in vehicles are vulnerable to theft and may also be easily accessible to someone experiencing a suicidal crisis. In a study conducted by Dr. Alexander Testa and colleagues examining firearm thefts from vehicles in San Antonio, researchers found that more than 2,600 firearms were stolen from vehicles in the city in 2024.⁹ San Antonio has the fifth highest rate of firearm thefts from vehicles in the United States. The study also found that more than 70% of participants in a Project Safe Neighborhoods survey stored firearms in unlocked vehicle compartments, such as a glove box and center consoles.¹⁰

To help prevent youth and those in crisis from accessing firearms, experts recommend that adults should secure firearms unloaded in a safe or locked container, with ammunition stored elsewhere. Expanding secure storage requirements and public education can reduce unauthorized access to firearms and help mitigate unintentional shootings, youth firearm deaths, and firearm suicide.

⁶ https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/statewidediscipline.html

⁷ https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf

⁸ Johns Hopkins, Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2025

⁹ Testa, A., Thompson, J., Mijares, L. *et al.* Patterns and characteristics of firearm thefts from vehicles in San Antonio, Texas. *Inj. Epidemiol.* **12**, 72 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-025-00630-9>

¹⁰ Ibid.



Policy recommendations to meet this objective include:

- Continued funding for Keep 'Em Safe, Texas, as well as strategies to increase the program's reach and effectiveness.
- Adopting legislation to:
 - Strengthen secure firearm storage requirements to prevent access by minors, unauthorized users, and people in crisis;
 - Reduce access to unsecured firearms left unattended in vehicles;
 - Strengthen Texas' child access prevention law (Penal Code Sec. 46.13) to include all minors under 18;
 - Educate parents about secure firearm storage through public institutions when a student has indicated suicidal ideation.

2. Strengthen Firearm Safety Protections for Young Adults

Texas Gun Sense supports a range of policies to strengthen firearm safety protections for young adults, including measures to address access to particularly lethal firearms, promote responsible firearm ownership through safety training, and close gaps in existing law.

In the 88th Legislative Session, Texas Gun Sense supported Uvalde parents in pushing for HB 2744, which would have raised the age from 18 to 21 to purchase semi-automatic rifles like the AR-15 used to murder their loved ones. In a historic bipartisan vote, the House Select Committee on Community Safety approved the legislation, but the full House did not put it to a vote.

Texans continue to show strong support for raising the age: 94% support legislation to raise the age to purchase any firearm to 21, including 78% of Republican voters.¹¹

Research supports strengthening firearm safety protections for young adults.

Three-fourths of school shooting perpetrators are of school-age,¹² and numerous individuals under 21 have perpetrated mass shootings, including:

- 2012 | Sandy Hook, CT – 26 dead, 2 injured
- 2018 | Parkland, FL – 17 dead, 17 injured
- 2022 | Buffalo, NY – 10 dead, 3 injured
- 2022 | Uvalde, TX – 21 dead, 18 injured

¹¹<https://www.uh.edu/hobby/tx2025/issues2025.pdf>

¹² <https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/>



In response to the 2022 U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruling that it is unconstitutional to deny 18-20 year olds the right to carry handguns in public, the Texas Department of Public Safety now issues handgun licenses to that age group; data show that **3,522 handgun license applications were issued to 18-20 year olds in 2025.**¹³ Additionally, the courts are currently divided on the constitutionality of long-standing laws prohibiting 18-20 year olds from purchasing handguns.

Texas Gun Sense opposes allowing 18-20 year olds to purchase and publicly carry handguns; the data on youth violence highlights the urgency for policies that strengthen firearm safety protections and promote responsible ownership among young adults.

Policies that raise the minimum age can also reduce **suicide**: a 2022 study found that state policies that limited the sale of handguns to those aged 18 or older were associated with an increased suicide rate among 18-to-20-year-olds between 2001 and 2017, by an average of 344 more deaths per year. State policies that limited the sale of handguns to those aged 21 or older were associated with an 18-percent reduction in the suicide rate among 18-to-20-year-olds.¹⁴

In the 90th Legislative Session, Texas Gun Sense will continue supporting survivors' efforts to advance reasonable age requirements, while pursuing additional policies to strengthen firearm safety protections for young adults.

Policy recommendations to meet this objective include:

- Preventing 18-to-20-year-olds from possessing a firearm with detachable magazines;
- Requiring *in-person* hunter education and License to Carry training before purchasing a firearm or possessing one outside the supervision of a parent or guardian;
- Preventing 18-to-20-year-olds from possessing semi-automatic rifles;
- Closing legal gaps that allow 18-20 year olds to possess firearms in vehicles on high school parking lots.

¹³ <https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/handgun-licensing/demographic-reports-calendar-year>

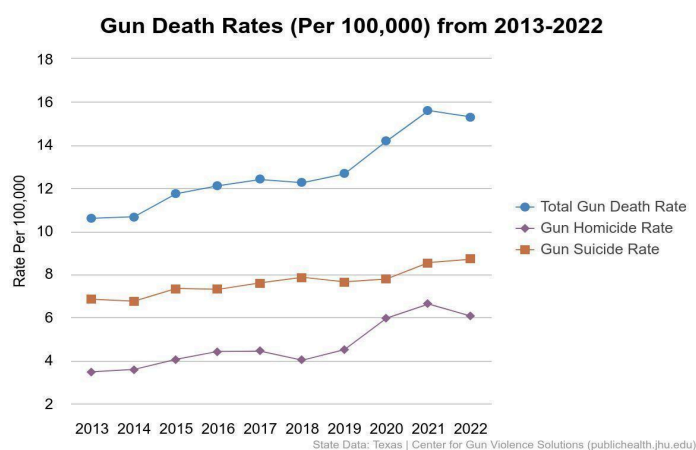
¹⁴ <https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m2436>



3. Defend against gun safety rollbacks

According to the Violence Policy Center’s analysis of 2024 CDC data, states with more guns and weaker gun laws have far higher rates of gun death overall.¹⁵

In that time and over the past two decades, the Texas Legislature approved more than 100 laws loosening gun regulations, though the majority of Texans support common sense gun laws.¹⁶



In recent years, investments in community violence intervention programs show positive results; for example, a longitudinal study analyzed the results of a community violence intervention program called Safe Streets in Baltimore, which focused on community engagement and conflict mediation to prevent firearm violence. This research examined 11 sites across Baltimore between 2007 and 2023 and found that the program was associated with a 42% reduction in homicides involving youth aged 15 to 24 and a 21% reduction in nonfatal shootings. While these findings were promising, the results varied by site and were not statistically significant.

An additional program focused on the Western District of Baltimore, an area that historically experienced high rates of violence. This program focused on changing the behavior of groups engaged in conflict that contributed to a large proportion of shootings and homicides. In the 18 months after implementation, researchers observed a decline in homicides and shootings.

While these programs have helped reduce tragedies, their progress is at risk of sliding, especially when the Texas Legislature is threatening local programs and partnerships.

¹⁵<https://vpc.org/publication/states-with-weaker-gun-laws-and-higher-gun-ownership-have-highest-gun-death-rates-new-2024-data-confirm/>

¹⁶ <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/05/10/texas-gun-fatalities-laws/>



Though Texas saw a 25% decrease in gun homicide rates in 2025 compared to the high in 2021,¹⁷ gun deaths involving both homicides and suicides remain a significant concern for Texas communities. **In 2024, nearly 9 out of every 100,000 Texans died by firearm suicide**, nearly twice the number of those who died from firearm homicide.¹⁸ Firearms were used in 62% of suicide deaths in Texas, compared with 10% of overall suicide attempts. Nationally, firearms account for approximately 57% of suicide deaths.¹⁹ To address Texas' suicide crisis, the state needs to significantly increase its investment in diverse prevention methods.

Texas Gun Sense will work strategically to protect existing safeguards and oppose efforts to weaken them. This includes pushing back against attempts to loosen restrictions on guns in sensitive places like schools and hospitals, upholding the rights of private property owners to enforce gun policies, and opposing legislation that allows those with documented dangerous histories to easily access firearms or that undermines effective enforcement of gun laws.

Additional Policy Objectives for the 90th Legislative Session

In addition to the above policy priorities, Texas Gun Sense will build progress toward broader, comprehensive gun safety policy reform in partnership with stakeholders and coalition partners.

This includes:

- Limiting access to firearm devices that enable rapid or automatic fire, including Glock switches and certain forced reset triggers;
- Requiring background checks on all gun sales;
- Investing in community violence intervention programs;
- Enforcing laws prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing firearms;
- Advocating for Extreme Risk Protection orders and other tools that allow law enforcement and the courts to legally remove firearms when someone is an immediate danger to themselves or others.

¹⁷ <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>

¹⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2026

¹⁹ Ibid