



Testimony for Senate State Affairs Hearing, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020

All testimony must be within the listed topic. The gun rights topic has two parts. Here is the wording, followed by suggestions of what you could present, listed by sub-topic.

Topic, Part 1: What the Lege has already done (Open Carry, Campus Carry, Lower LTC Fee)

"Examine Second Amendment legislation passed since the 84th Legislative Session including open carry, campus carry, and lowering the license to carry fee. Determine the impact these laws have made on furthering and protecting Second Amendment rights."

Topic, Part 2: What else the Lege can do (Constitutional Carry, end "Gun-Free" Zones, etc.)

"Make recommendations that may further protect and enhance Texans' Second Amendment right to bear arms."

Constitutional Carry

- Texas needs to stop requiring a license to carry handguns in public.
- The current ban on carrying handguns was designed so that the whites could still control newly-freed black slaves after the Civil War. It perpetuates an elitist mindset. It's time to end that.
- Requiring a license hurts those who are poor, busy, rural, etc. It also keeps potential victims from being able to defend themselves right away. And it doesn't stop bad guys.
- 31 states don't require a license to carry a handgun (about half of them say it must be open carried; the other half allow open or concealed without a permit). Texas is in the minority.
- Getting rid of the training requirement does not endanger public safety. States that abandoned training requirements have found that people generally seek more training voluntarily, and public safety stays the same or gets better.

See also GOA factsheet on the 2019 Constitutional Carry bill: bit.ly/2J15J6X

See also TYR Constitutional Carry factsheet: priorities.texasyr.gop/assets/pdfs/cc.pdf

Gun-Free Zones

- Texas should end all government-mandated "gun-free" zones. They make us more vulnerable.
- Expand campus carry to K-12 schools, so any LTC holder can carry concealed.
- Allow schools to set up armed volunteer security teams like church volunteer security teams.
- Fix the multi-purpose courthouse building gun bans. Many counties infringe rights by banning carry throughout these buildings. AG opinion says this violates current law; make this clearer.
- Get rid of the 51% bans (banning carry at places that make 51% or more of their income from alcohol to be served on premises -- i.e., bars, some festivals). It's already illegal to carry while intoxicated. Allow "designated carriers," similar to "designated drivers." If we're not intoxicated, let us carry.

See also GOA factsheet including gun-free zones: bit.ly/39ZyCL4

See also data and further arguments for school carry: bit.ly/38P3FsG

Other Measures to Promote (similar to bills GOA promoted in 2019)

- Pass a “Made in Texas” Intrastate Protection Act so that firearms, ammo, and accessories made in TX aren’t subject to federal regulations (*similar to HB 227 by Krause, 2019*)
- Pass a Suppressor Freedom Bill (*similar to HB 2286 by Oliverson, 2019; see bit.ly/3c50GhJ*)
- Pass a Federal Firearms Protection Act, asserting that Texas won't use resources or personnel to enforce Federal gun regulations (*similar to SB 378 by Hall, HB 237 by Krause, HB 4041 by Toth*)

Campus Carry (passed in 2015)

- It makes our schools safer, and there have not been problems with people carrying.
- Texas should clarify that the “accidental showing” protection applies to campuses also, and public universities should not punish students who may slightly print or accidentally show their gun while still carrying concealed according to the statutory definition. (Some students are afraid of being suspended for this -- please share personal stories if you know them.)

Open Carry (passed in 2015)

- In 2015, Texas became the 45th state to allow license holders to carry visible guns.
- How we carry is our personal choice – open or concealed. We choose whatever best suits each day’s outfit and activities. (Share your positive experiences open carrying.)
- Licensed open carry was a step in the right direction, but it’s time to join the majority of the US and get rid of the license requirement.

Lower LTC Fee (passed in 2017)

- In 2017, Texas lowered the fee to get a license from \$140 to \$40.
- It's nice that it costs less, but Texas still needs to get rid of the license requirement.

Other sources for data or talking points:

- General gun rights talking points (data with references): bit.ly/2kAunBm
- TPPF research paper (TX gun data): files.texaspolicy.com/uploads/2019/11/11124634/Cohen-Come-and-Take-It-Firearm-Violence.pdf
- John Lott’s website packed with gun data: www.crimeresearch.org

General Tips on Presenting Testimony

Testimony should be clear, specific, personal, and true. Stay within the time limit.

- **Clear**
 - Start with your main point.
 - Avoid “Maybe we could...” or “couldn’t we...?” or “What about...?”
 - Instead, use “We should...” “Texas needs...” and “I know...”
- **Specific**
 - Give them a specific proposal
 - Not “I support gun rights,” but “Stop requiring a license to carry a handgun.”
- **Personal**
 - Tell them a story, from your heart, about your experiences.
 - Show why you believe gun rights policies helps your family and makes you safer.
- **True**
 - Fact-check all the facts.
 - Be sure you personally believe what you are presenting as your opinion.

Here’s what to say:

1. “My name is _____, I am representing myself, and I am discussing the 2A topic.”

****You can represent an organization ONLY if they have given you specific authority to do so.*

2. Give them one sentence about yourself to add credibility. Keep it brief.

Example: “I’m a mother, a teacher, and a member of Gun Owners of America.”

3. Tell them your main point.

Example: “I want the committee to pass Constitutional Carry and end gun-free zones.”

4. Share a short personal story that explains why you want this policy. Tell them about your life and how this would make you safer and help you protect your family.

Example: “I work at a bar and have to walk back to my car at 2AM – I can’t carry a handgun because of the 51% prohibition, and I often am afraid of being attacked. I want a chance at saving my own life.”

5. Give them facts and data that support your point and your story.

Example: “Over 94% of mass attacks with guns happen in gun-free zones because the victims can’t adequately defend themselves.”

6. If you gave them a handout, remind them to look at it.

Example: “Please see my handout for [the source for these statistics, more data, more reasons why we are safer when we end gun-free zones].”

7. End with your main point again. Be sure you stop on time.

Hint: Watch the timer; skip to the end of your testimony if you need to.