

Jeremy Whittaker
El Paso TX
20 Aug 2020

Committee Members
Committee for Mass Violence Prevention & Community Safety

Dear Committee Members:

Having spent 21 years in the military service defending our nation and peoples inalienable rights such as freedom of speech and the right to bear arms, I oppose any such Red Flag proposals, and would definitely have heartburn were my rights to be amended by the implementation of additional laws stating that: Doing harm to others is illegal. Additionally, if you are deemed a danger to self or others, your right to bear arms are removed for safety purposes.

In my opinion Red Flag proposals are a slippery slope that could be abused by anyone with an aversion to firearms. Rather than funding a redundant ordinance, why not put the effort into promoting and improving the systems already in place? For example, promoting community outreach programs teaching firearm safety, family values, the importance of morals ***“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”***, active shooter response, and technology that improves connectivity between mental health providers, and law enforcement.

- Gun control groups recognize Red Flag laws as a means of advancing their gun control agenda. They see it as a gateway for other gun control measures, and they are very interested in Texas passing Red Flag as the tipping point for even more gun control laws in Texas and beyond.
- It builds on the false premise that we can stop evil and seeks to improve safety by removal of a tool.
- Suggestions to strip citizens of rights based on what they might do is dangerous to liberty and our founding principles of **due process**.
- Existing law includes Mental Health Commitments which address a person who poses a risk of danger to themselves or others.
- **Existing Texas law:**
 - Magistrate’s Temporary Protective Order (Texas Code Crim. Proc. 17.292) - after an arrest for an offense involving family violence or other specified items

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- o Family Violence Protective Order (Texas Family Code, Title 4) - when family violence has occurred and is likely to occur again
- o Mental Health Commitments (Texas Mental Health Code, Title 7) - clear and convincing evidence that the person is a danger to self or others (specific requirements)

In closing, I must remind you that we cannot regulate evil by disarming law abiding citizens. Evil does not care what our laws say, and someone bent on harm to others will no doubt procure weaponry by illegal means. Red Flag proposals have too much potential to be abused by those who dramatize what they do not understand.

Better to educate people on the signs and symptoms of those with potential need of behavioral health resources, and the safe use of firearms, and personal defense measures such as active shooter drills, and local resources for both mental health and emergency response.

Thank you for your time, and your service to the people of our great state of Texas.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Whittaker

El Paso, TX