

From: David Belluomini

To: Mass Violence Prevention and Community Safety Committee

I write my comments as a retired California Police Captain and now a proud resident of Texas. My law enforcement experience spans over 30 years at various agencies. I've earned both a Bachelors and Master's Degree in Criminology and I'm a graduate of the California POST Command College. My assignments have varied, but the focus of my career has involved Community and Problem Oriented Policing. I've seen and participated in community empowerment, where neighborhoods partner with limited government to make their lives safer and more prosperous.

I've also seen my share of violence, death, despair and the calamity of community victimhood and the toll it takes on the human condition. I've witnessed firsthand the politics that perpetuate it and feed upon it; I know what it looks like. I've found that an ever expanding and ever controlling government does more harm than good for its citizens.

Frankly, I was happy to leave my professional life behind and enjoy retirement, but the direction Texas is heading won't let me stay silent. Latter in this writing I will address specific items related to proposed legislation, and you'll read some of my California experience and the cautionary tale it portends for Texas. But before that, I submit the following:

It's clear that the primary agenda of this committee is gun control under the guise of "common sense solutions" and "reasonable" restrictions, based on what will invariably be bogus research with a social justice warrior mindset. But gun control, as a body of knowledge, is actually a fraud and a coercive force imposed upon law abiding citizens with the express intention of disarming them and making self-defensive behavior a crime. It's more than ironic that the focus of this committee, formed months ago, is mass violence prevention and community safety, while currently Democratic run cities across our nation are on fire and mass violence and unsafe communities grow by the day. In a nutshell: One of the best ways to prevent mass violence and promote community safety is to categorically reject the modern day Democratic Marxist agenda and platform; it's killing people and destroying communities. Still with me?

Some of the more recent subversive tactics gaining steam with the left is the so called, "reimagining of the police" and addressing "police violence", but oddly nothing is mentioned about violent criminal behavior, which is also gaining steam.

Criminal violence in turn creates a call for service and a demand for police action to stop that violence, sometimes necessitating violence to do so; the irony and hypocrisy is palpable. There is also nothing mentioned these days about “gang violence”, which is the single greatest source of murder and injury by firearms. But addressing gang violence spoils the narrative and creates awkwardness amidst the identity politics and political correctness of the day. There isn’t an “epidemic” of “gun violence” or “police violence”, there’s an epidemic of unchecked gang violence.

The law enforcement agencies I’m familiar with have been in a constant state of reform and improvement for decades and make public service their priority. There are always issues to address and adjustments to be made, but the vast majority of the men and women I know in the profession are dedicated, caring and restrained in their actions. But they’re being driven away. Who or what will replace them? In Venezuela, eventually it was the Colectivos.

While police engage in reform and try to do better, what hasn’t reformed is the violent criminal, nor has there been a call for such reformation. To be sure, with gang violence being the exception, violent crime has gone down over the years due to proactive police and community partnerships, this even though the police are constantly given more to do and less to do it with. Violent crime is increasing rapidly in our large cities, and leftist politics is to blame.

One of the first acts of a tyrannical agenda is controlling terms and language in order to control the narrative. For instance, there is no such thing as “gun violence”. Guns don’t just jump out of a holster and start blasting away. There is only criminal behavior that is perpetuated in a variety of ways, but by making the “gun” the focus and the villain, the criminal is given a pass and it creates the deceptive impression that the gun is the problem; then you can lie and say, take away the guns, you take away the problem. It is an insidious and deadly characterization that makes law abiding gun owners the enemy and criminals the victim and ultimately the victor. In leftist parlance, the phrase, “taking guns off the streets”, really means taking them out of the locked safes of law abiding citizens. All the while, armed criminals ply their trade amidst a gradually disarmed populace. The leftist agenda dictates, a nation in chaos, is a nation in need of a massive government caretaker apparatus; chaos is good for business.

It appears your committee will be subjected to an academic “study” which will allege a connection between mass violence and systemic racism; how convenient. Since the overwhelming majority of elitist academia is an active combatant in the

war against liberty and freedom, they're ideology and assertions are biased and ring hollow. The "Statement of Equity", on the website of the Center for Violence Prevention makes their biased, social justice warrior agenda very clear. Here's a pro tip; racism is not systemic in the criminal justice system. What's systemic is academia and the lefts obsession with their tailored view of racism.

Then what should government do? How about enforcing existing laws? Laws at the state and national level are adequate to protect us, and expanding our Second Amendment rights only helps us. We don't need anti-gun ownership laws in Texas; we need to intelligently enforce current criminal law. Florida has now gone the route of gun control with abusive criminal justice results and Texas could be next unless you take action to prevent it.

I have specific thoughts on my California experience with gun control and the danger signs of Texas going the way of California; yes, even Texas can fall if you let it. To be sure, some of your committee members are counting on it:

- 1) First, as mentioned, gun control is a scam, all of it; it's not about guns, but about control. It has always been a political power grab and has never been about safety or even crime. These laws are never meant to remain as written, but are meant to be incrementally expanded, often without notice. The gun control logic goes like this; since gun control isn't working, we must have more gun control. It only makes sense when you realize, as I did in California, that the long game is total civilian disarmament. Gun control changes the culture, safety, liberty and livability of a state into something you don't want.
- 2) Expanded Background Checks; simply put, expanded background checks can only work for gun controllers if there is a national gun registry to facilitate confiscation; expect that to be an incremental future addition to any "universal background check" legislation. The only reason to register anything with the government is to track it, tax it or confiscate it. And that is currently happening in many states. It should also be noted that, almost without exception, spree killers using firearms had undergone a background check. Reject universal background checks; they're a Trojan horse.
- 3) Red Flag Laws; another Trojan horse and a gun controllers dream. They're unconstitutional and a limitless anti-second amendment platform that target legal gun ownership. They lack due process through secret, one-sided ex parte hearings and have not been shown to impact crimes committed with firearms. It's unclear why an ex parte hearing is even necessary. A gun owner has to literally pay thousands of dollars to prove their innocence

before a judge of uncertain ideology. These laws are also meant to be expanded incrementally. They're a fishing expedition made on a hunch, not probable cause. In fact, reasonable suspicion is the standard used for this insidious constitutional infringement, well below the standard for issuance of a search warrant. If you wanted a mechanism to promote police and/or government abuse, and give aid and comfort to your enemies, then red flag laws are for you. In the category of, "academia is a biased fraud"; not long ago, the University of California issued a ridiculous and biased study on California's red flag law. Most of the serious cases cited were criminal arrests where guns were taken incident to the arrest; the red flag law was unnecessary, but was added for cosmetic effect and to falsely create an appearance of necessity and that of "saving lives". It should be noted that the State of California pays the University of California millions of dollars a year to act as their gun control propaganda machine. How much does the Center for Violence Prevention receive from Texas? Just food for thought.

- 4) Government partnerships with Surveillance Capitalism have many potential and horrific civil liberty issues associated with them. Google, Facebook, Twitter and other social media are not a friend of the Second Amendment, or of liberty for that matter. They've made their support for a leftist political agenda very clear. The current access that private technology companies have to our personal information is chilling. If you add an official government partnership component to that access you will have willingly made them agents of the state; expect any lines drawn for privacy to be constantly blurred. Another matter for concern is the discussion of making Credit Card companies essentially agents of the state by enlisting them to monitor private persons spending habits. Sadly, all this is routine for private enterprise to turn a profit, but if a government body becomes the recipient of social media or other private data without due process (I mean real due process), count on it to turn into something like China's Social Credit Score surveillance apparatus. You may be stunned to know what off the shelf surveillance software currently exists for law enforcement today; don't make it worse by partnering with the enemies of liberty.
- 5) California is awash with "gun free zones", and they're as dangerous as they are tyrannical. They don't "save lives" or make communities safer. A strong case can be made that gun free zones cost lives. Nearly all spree killers, everywhere in the world, choose gun free zones where the disarmed congregate and resistance is futile, this in order to elevate body count. Texas should be making efforts to eliminate gun free zones as much as possible; killers don't respect them and law abiding gun owners shouldn't have to be subjected to them.

The last five months have proven that Marist ideology is making an open play for our Nation and Texas. Please resist it. Keep Texas, Texas. Irreparably harm will otherwise result.