

Input Regarding Mass Violence Prevention & Community Safety

My name is Sarah Malone. I am a public-school teacher in Austin. As such, I normally spend about 10 hours a day, Monday through Friday, in a gun-free zone. This does not make me feel safe, and according to statistics, it does not make me *be* safe from violent crime, since according to The Crime Prevention Research Center, more than 97 % of mass public shootings occur in gun-free zones. (Crime Prevention Research Center (2018). UPDATED: Mass Public Shootings Keep Occurring in Gun-Free Zones: 97.8% of attacks since 1950. <https://crimeresearch.org/2018/06/more-misleading-information-from-bloombergs-ev-erytown-for-gun-safety-on-guns-analysis-of-recent-mass-shootings/>)

Those who would attempt to violently attack a random group of people are not likely to be deterred by a law that says guns are not allowed in certain places – even if they notice a big sign to that effect at the entrance to a particular building. Instead, it is the law-abiding gunowners of Texas who leave their handgun behind when they enter a gun-free zone – and consequently make themselves, as well as those around them, easy targets for a murderously-minded individual.

Although a school district in Texas may allow certain of its employees who are well-trained LTC holders to conceal-carry their handgun at school, this is not enough. A Texas teacher who is not so designated should not have to leave behind her tool for self-defense – and her Constitutionally affirmed rights – when she enters her place of employment and hope that, should an active shooter situation arise in her school, there will be *somebody* chosen by the district to be at the right place in the building at the right time to meet force with force and eliminate the threat to all building occupants.

Earlier today, I participated in the usual professional development course regarding school safety. Once again, we teachers received instruction about protocol for various threatening situations, including the presence of an active shooter in the building. We were told to cover our windows (all the doors have windows – How hard would it be for an intruder to break the window, reach in, and open the door?), turn off our lights, ensure that the door is locked, and then

disperse the students along different walls of the classroom (this last bit of instruction is new; previously we were told to huddle together in one spot: a mass shooter's dream-come-true). Obviously, the next thing to do would be to hope and pray that the shooter did not enter our room – because we would be utterly defenseless.

I urge the 86th Texas Legislature not to leave Texas public-school teachers, and the students they serve, defenseless, but to pass legislation to allow teachers to conceal-carry their weapons at school – as four other states have already done, with no negative consequences. .(Crime Prevention Research Center (2018). States that allow school staff and teachers to carry guns. <https://crimeresearch.org/2018/03/states-allow-teachers-staff-carry-guns/>)

I further urge that the Legislature pass legislation to abolish *all* gun-free zones, so Texans can legally defend themselves wherever they happen to be in our great state.