

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2242
By: Howard
Community Safety, Select
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The statewide safe gun storage campaign known as "Keep 'Em Safe Texas" was first launched in 2019 to provide education on how to properly store a firearm with the goal of combating avoidable firearm accidents, particularly among children, and rising suicide rates in Texas. The campaign has reached cities across Texas with resources on how to properly store a firearm. However, the problem still remains and more could be done to expand the messaging of the campaign. Specifically, targeting drivers through the Texas Department of Transportation's dynamic messaging signs would be a useful tool in combating the issue of firearms being stolen from vehicles. Reports show that on average, at least one gun is stolen from a vehicle every 15 minutes, and in 2022, there were 4,140 firearms reported to police as stolen from vehicles in Houston alone. To help address this issue, H.B. 2242 seeks to require relevant information regarding the safe storage of firearms for the DPS Keep 'Em Safe Texas Gun Storage Campaign to be broadcast to Texas drivers using an existing system of dynamic message signs located across Texas.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2242 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in consultation with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), to establish and implement a plan for providing relevant information to the public regarding the safe storage of firearms for the DPS Keep 'Em Safe Texas Gun Storage Campaign using an existing system of dynamic message signs located across Texas. The bill expressly does not require TxDOT to use any existing system of dynamic message signs to provide the information if TxDOT receives notice from the Federal Highway Administration that the use of the signs would result in the loss of federal highway funding or other punitive actions taken against the state due to noncompliance with federal laws, regulations, or policies.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.