

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 3

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 12:26 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 27, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Elizabeth Hanks
Moms Demand Action
Houston, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Liz Hanks. My husband and I are born and raised Houstonians. We went to Texas public schools from kindergarten to college and are proud of that fact. We are raising two little girls in Houston now, but are scared to send them to public school because they are not safe. Moreover, our state doesn't seem able to make the decisions that we need to keep them safe.

More guns do not make us more safe, as we see daily. More guns in schools do not make schools more safe, especially when wielded by teachers or staff with minimal training as is contemplated in this bill.

If you care about students, if you care about teachers, if you care about parents, then listen to them. We have told you what we want: background checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, raising the age to buy assault style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. We have not asked you to put more guns into schools because that is not what we want.

I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and to vote no on pushing more guns into our schools. Thank you.

Claire Breaux
Self-teacher
Houston, TX

As a teacher with 15 yrs experience in public schools in Texas and a graduate of Houston area public schools, I'm a dissapointed that you refuse to keep out children and teachers safe time and time again. Your only solution is more guns and we have already countless studies in place to show the severe detriment these programs cause to the safety and mental health of all.
PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS BILL. YOU WILL CONTINUE TO LOSE QUALIFIED AND PASSIONATE TEACHERS AND OUR COMMUNITIES WILL SUFFER CONTINUOUSLY. DO THE RIGHT THING AND PROTECT US! DO YOUR JOB!

Rene Lugo
Self
Grand Prairie, TX

Hello my name is Rene Lugo. I went to public schools from elementary to college and proud of that fact. I have two nephews: one is in middle school and the other is about to start kindergarten in Fall of 2023. More guns do not make us more safe, as we see the daily local news. Everyday is a story of gun violence in DFW (Dallas Fort Worth). More guns in schools do not make schools safer. If you care about students, if you care about teachers, if you care about parents then listen to them. We need background checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, raising the age to buy assault style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and vote No on pushing more guns into my nephews school. Thank you

Michelle Real, Ms.
Self - Law Enforcement Analyst
Hutto, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB 3.

Denise Manley
Self
Houston, TX

My husband and I are lifelong Houstonians and gun owners and we strongly oppose the requirement for guns in schools to obtain safety funding. Our daughter attends 7th grade in public school in HISD and it is clear we have failed her and all of our children but the solution we absolutely know does not work is more guns. There is plenty of evidence that more guns (especially in untrained or not well-trained hands) make our children less safe, not more. Even though it may "feel" better to imagine armed protectors, the reality is that it is not safer and the false sense of safety or "achievement" stops the real progress we need. We want increased age limits, more and more thorough background checks, and safe storage regulations. Please listen to parents and reject legislation that achieves little but a false sense of accomplishment while serving the interests of gun sales. Thank you.

Valerie Musick
Self / medial professional- speech language pathologist
Houston, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is Valerie Musick. I am a mom of 2 boys and a licensed speech language pathologist. I have worked in school settings and can attest that children learn best when a positive and nurturing climate exists. Increased school resource officers (SRO) and additional armed staff does not create a positive learning environment. Armed staff in schools poses a serious risk to the learning and health of students, especially to historically marginalized students and students with disabilities. Increased SROs or armed staff would undoubtedly lead to increased widespread and disproportionate force against students. This will indeed disrupt any effort of creating a positive school climate and will negatively impact students ability to learn. In Texas between 2011-2015 there were nearly 2,500 incidents when a SRO used force against students. During this time, Black students made up just 13 percent of the student body, but made up 40 percent of SRO use of force incidents. Black students and students with disabilities are roughly three times more likely to be arrested than white students. Let's do all we can to make all students feel safe. More guns is not an effective solution.

This bill would ultimately require all schools to have additional staff armed. A person should not be armed in a public school unless security is their primary job. Increasing armed staff and introducing more guns into schools is not a proven and effective solution. In contrast, it increases serious safety risks to our students. As a parent who is terrified to send her boys to school every day and as a medical healthcare professional I strongly oppose TX HB3. I urge you to reconsider this bill on behalf of myself and the majority of Texas parents.

Thank you

Melissa Garza
Self
San Antonio, TX

As a Mother of six school aged children the trauma is deeply rooted and anxiety levels are high. We need to support the children of our future lawyers, doctors and nurses ect. To become aware of health counseling and mental health services available 24-7-365-12!!! Respectfully, Melissa Garza

Colleen Donart
Self and Moms Demand Action
Sugar Land, TX

I, nor do most people I know including many teachers, do not support this bill. What we are desperately needing is common sense gun legislation that includes background checks, red flag laws, NO permitless carry. HB3 is not the solution to safer schools. More guns are not the answer to the rising gun violence in our society. Please listen to what the public and voters really want to protect our children.

Marleena Escobar, Mrs.
self
Richmond, TX

I oppose guns in schools please say no to HB3.

Dorothy Susan Montz
Self/ Retired Real Estate
Pearland, TX

I am a grandmother of young boys and men whos schooling in Texas has spanned 20 years to the present, during that time the gun violence in our schools has continued to increase. I remember the day that police and life flight helicopters flew over my home in response to the shootings in Santa Fe. Fear spreads through my body every time I hear police sirens during the school day when the kids are in school wondering if they are in response to yet another mass shooting.

I am opposed to this bill which could require teachers to be armed. It is a teachers job is to teach our children not protect them from people armed with any type of gun especially assault weapons. Evidence shows that arming teachers and staff is not an effective strategy for preventing gun violence in school and poses a risk to children. We need only look at the Uvalde shootings to see that having armed people on school grounds doesn't save lives. There were plenty there and still children and teachers were killed.

It is time to stop dancing around the issue of gun violence and pass laws which are actually gun sense laws that required background checks, red flag laws, safe storage laws to name just a few. More guns have proven not to be a solution to gun violence. I pray that you will pass gun laws that ACTUALLY put our children as a #1 top priority. Texas has lost too many children to senseless gun violence.

Jessica Schauffert
Moms Demand Action AND self
Austin, TX

I oppose guns in school, please vote no to HB3

Jessica Schauffert
Self
Austin, TX

I'm against guns in school, please vote no to HB3.

Clark Newman
Self- Aerospace Engineer
Houston, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is Clark Newman. I attended Texas public schools from kindergarten to college and am proud of that. I currently work at NASA and send my oldest son to first grade at a public school. This bill is alarming and gives me pause about the state I live in for I am afraid to send my children to school. More guns do not make schools more safe. Implementing researched based policies such as background checks on every gun sale, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy assault rifles from 18 to 21 would make our schools safe. I urge you to rewrite this dangerous bill and avoid increasing guns in our schools. Thank you

Jacqueline Santillan
self
Rosharon, TX

Dear committee members:

My name is Jackie Santillan. I attended public schools in Texas from first grade through 12th. I got my undergraduate degree from UT Austin. I earned my masters of education in counseling from St. Thomas University in Houston. I taught in Texas public schools for 11 years. I am terrified to send my four-year-old son to kindergarten next year in Texas public schools.

I pay thousands of dollars in taxes so that my child can attend Texas public schools, but I am now having to tour private schools because I don't feel safe with the measures that lawmakers have taken to protect him at the public school in our neighborhood.

When I was a third grade teacher in Pasadena ISD, there was a mouse in my classroom. I loved my students, but I ran out of the classroom, screaming. When I came back into the classroom, one of my eight-year-old students said, "You didn't even protect us from a mouse. How will you protect us from a shooter?" Eight-year-olds should not have to think about that. Teachers should not have to protect their students in that way. And teachers will not be able to protect their students in that way.

I strongly oppose guns in schools. As has been shown, countless times, a good guy with a gun does not necessarily stop a bad guy with a gun. We need evidence-based policies like stricter background checks, red flag laws, and an increased age limit for purchasing guns to keep our kids safe.

Please keep my kid safe. Thank you.

Jennifer Garoutte
Self/mother
Pearland, TX

I am a mother of two children attending public school in Texas. I oppose guns in schools. Please vote No on HB3.

Aaron Garoutte, Dr.
Self/Orasure Technologies
Pearland, TX

I am a father of two children attending public schools in Texas. I moved my family to Texas seeking professional development and have found fruitful career opportunities here. However, I am appalled at the lax gun regulations in this state. I vehemently oppose guns in schools. Please vote No on HB3.

Paula Hansen
self - retired
Sugar Land, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB3. At its core, this a bill to arm more teachers in Texas. Data has shown this to be an ineffective way to keep our kids safe. As a former teacher, I am appalled at this cavalier attitude towards more guns in schools. This is not a real solution. Teachers are in their profession to teach, not to be security guards, and first responders to a school shooting. We all know what happened in Uvalde.

Samantha Howell
Self, chief of staff
Austin, TX

I oppose guns in schools; please vote NO on HB3.

Millie Mitchell, Mrs
MOMS Demand Action
Sugar Land, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB 3. At its core, this is a bill to arm more teachers in Texas. Data has shown this to be an ineffective way to keep our kids safe. As a former teacher, I am appalled at this cavalier attitude towards guns in school. This is not a real solution. Teachers are in their profession to teach, not to be security guards, and first responders to a school shooting.

Bethany Pitchford
Self
Lubbock, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB3.

Melissa Imhoff
Self
Dallas, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Vote no on HB 3.

Erica Grandin
Self
Frisco, TX

I live in Denton County in Frisco, TX and I send my children to public elementary school. Every day that I drop them off at school, I tell them I love them and wonder if they will be safe until I can pick them up at the end of the day. The families in Texas should not fear sending our kids to school. Vote no to HB3 and do not put more guns in our schools.

Denise Whitney
Self, retail planner
Houston, TX

I oppose guns in schools. More guns do not make us more safe, as we see daily. More guns in schools do not make schools more safe, especially when wielded by teachers or staff with minimal training as is contemplated in this bill.

If you care about students, if you care about teachers, if you care about parents, then listen to them. We have told you what we want: background checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, raising the age to buy assault style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. We have not asked you to put more guns into schools because that is not what we want.

I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and to vote no on pushing more guns into our schools. Thank you.

Vanessa Adams
Self
Cypress, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is Vanessa Adams. I attended Texas public schools for most of my childhood education. As well I graduated from the University of Texas in Austin. Next year I will send my oldest child to kindergarten at a public school and I'm very scared about what steps our lawmakers are taking to protect him at school.

This bill is alarming and gives me pause about the state I live in for I am afraid to send my children to school. More guns do not make schools more safe. Implementing researched based policies such as background checks on every gun sale, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy assault rifles from 18 to 21 would make our schools safe. I urge you to rewrite this dangerous bill and avoid increasing guns in our schools. Thank you.

Wes Adams
Self
Cypress, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is wes Adams. I attended Texas public schools from kindergarten to college and am proud of that. This bill is alarming and gives me pause about the state I live in for I am afraid to send my children to school. More guns do not make schools more safe. Implementing researched based policies such as background checks on every gun sale, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy assault rifles from 18 to 21 would make our schools safe. I urge you to rewrite this dangerous bill and avoid increasing guns in our schools. Thank you

Susan Pintchovski
Myself
Austin, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is Susan Pintchovski.

My husband and I have lived in Texas for almost 40 years. My husband is a gun owner.

In another year, our granddaughter will begin school in Austin and although I want her to be safe at school, I firmly believe that having guns in schools does not make my grand child safer. A matter of fact, research shows that it takes a lots of training hours to effectively take down a person with a semi automatic. Teachers or minimally trained guardians can not be expected to do that. If you care about my grand child and all our Texas children please listen to us -the majority of Texans, when we say we support background checks on every gun sale, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy military assault style rifles from 18 to 21. I have not asked you to put more guns in schools because that is not what parents, grandparents and Texans want. I urge you to rethink the dangerous bill and vote NO on pushing more guns into schools. Thank you .

Ginger /

Self speech pathologist

San Antonio, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. It requires no training, and arming teachers does not make our schools safer

Janeen Castillo

Self - stay at home mom

Boerne, TX

DO NOT SUPPORT

There is absolutely ZERO data that supports arming teachers, so, this is a literal waste of money .

Law based on opinion & fear mongering & ego stroking is disgraceful & has ZERO integrity & says as much about those creating & supporting these bills. Stop wasting our time & money. Do the real actual work of **FIXING SYSTEMS**. Do the actual work of the jobs you are voted in to do. Put in the time & effort & stop this ignorant narrow minded nonsense that is only politics & not actual government

Calista Herbert

Self/Retired

Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Many years of study and actual live experiences have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. We in Texas know this all too well from the immense tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

We should focus instead on investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes.

Do not arm our school campuses.

Robin Breed
Moms Demand Action
Austin, TX

Hello, my name is Robin Breed. I am representing myself and as a volunteer with the Texas Chapter of Moms Demand Action in opposition to HB 3.

While HB 3 addresses school safety, one component of the bill mandates there will be an armed presence at every Texas school, despite the lack of evidence that armed officers prevent or deter school shootings; Uvalde being our most recent tragedy to dispel this myth that a good guy with a gun, or 400, will save the day.

Putting more guns in schools, particularly into the hands of untrained civilians whose primary role isn't security makes everyone in that school less safe. Just weeks ago an armed superintendent in Rising Star, Texas left his loaded gun in a bathroom at an elementary school where a 3rd grader found it. This near miss is just one of many examples of what happens when teachers and staff with minimal training are given the awesome responsibility of educating our children while also being expected to respond to an active shooter.

While we ALL want our kids and teachers to be safe we adamantly oppose any effort to arm teachers and other staff.

My wish is that this legislature would do more than react defensively to the rising gun violence present at our schools and instead pivot to preventing would-be shooters from having such easy access to these deadly weapons. We oppose HB3 and any other bill that seeks to ultimately arm teachers.

We support data-driven solutions to reducing gun violence like background checks on all gun purchases, funding CVIPs and red flag laws, raising the age to purchase assault style weapons to 21 and other measures that have proven outcomes and put absolutely no one in danger.

Thank you.

Yvonne Meyer, Grandma
Grandson
Houston, TX

It is not productive or protective for our most treasured- our children- to increase gun holders in our schools. It is time we become the adults who must protect these children and find solutions that both protect our children without putting them in a gun infested environment. There are other solutions. Electronic ID is 1 possibility.

Claire Hein Blanton, Rev. Dr.
Self
Bellaire, TX

Hello -

As a mother, minister, and professor with a student in HISD I think that it is an abhorrent idea to arm teachers in the name of "school safety." Evidence based research indicates that more armed people on campus does not increase safety but does the opposite. teachers do not want to be armed. They are there to teach, not to do the job of policing our Texas students because law makers are too scared to take the appropriate action of enacting common sense Gun laws. If you really believe that mental health is the common denominator of gun violence then find better mental health initiatives in schools. The obvious truth is that our elected officials are beholden to the NRA and far right political talking heads than realizing that the more common sense and cheaper option is to realize the problem is not arming teachers but making the accessibility and responsibility of gun ownership.

I believe with every ounce of my soul that God calls us to decrease violence, not help perpetuate it. My 2 year old and 5 year old should not be carrying the burden of active shooter drills because the Texas Lege thinks the burden should be on them and not on adults. May God have mercy on your souls if you vote in favor of this bill.

Virginia Stogner mcDavid, ms

Self

houston, TX

dear Committee Members:

my name is Ginny Stogner McDavid, and my husband & I attended Texas public schools from 1st through college. We have a son in Houston ISD, but we adamantly oppose turning our school into forts.

If you care about students, teachers, and parents, then listen to them. We have told you what we want: universal background checks on all gun sales, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy guns to 21. We have not asked you to put more guns in schools because that doesn't work. I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and vote no on pushing more guns into our schools.

thank you,

ginny Stogner McDavid
6130 Spruce Forest Drive
houston, TX 77092

Mary Gleason

Self/nurse

Houston, TX

I am opposed to ANY efforts to arm teachers and/or school staff members in our State. There is no research/data to support the effectiveness of this drastic measure but there is much research demonstrating that the presence of a gun directly increases the risk for harm/death of children.

I have a background working in schools as a school nurse and have first hand experience on this issue. I ask that the committee turn their efforts toward research based interventions to prevent gun violence in schools.

Thank you

Emily Watson

self

Austin, TX

As the parent of two children in Texas public elementary school here in Austin, I'm writing to express my concerns about this dangerous bill. Teachers, staff, parents, and students do not want guns on campus.

More guns do not keep us safe -- a prime example is what we saw unfold in Uvalde. With hundreds of armed, well-trained officers outside the door, they were unable to stop the mass murder from occurring. If the police were unwilling to act in the critical moment, how can you possibly think someone with the minimal training required in this bill will handle such a situation? The potential for tragic and unintentional deaths on school grounds will only increase if this bill becomes a law. The leading cause of death in children and young adults in the US is guns. Putting more guns with children cannot be the solution we put forward.

Here's what the vast majority of Texans do want: background checks on all gun sales, a red flag law, and to raise the age of buying an assault weapon from 18 to 21. Please listen to the families affected by daily gun violence-- there are so many families-- they are on the front lines of these issues. I'm sure our teachers would prefer a salary increase or increased funds for school supplies.

As a mom, I worry about my kids' safety above everything else. My husband and I are very concerned about school safety because of the huge number of guns already in the public. I memorize what my children wear to school each day because I'm so worried I will have to pick them out of a crowd after some incident on their campus -- or in our worst nightmare having to describe what they were wearing because I can't get to them.

I urge you to vote no on this bill.

Amy Ghiselin

self

Pearland, TX

My name is Amy Ghiselin, and I am representing myself in opposition to HB 3. I am the parent of 3 children attending school on campuses in Texas, and HB 3, requiring armed adult(s) on campuses, will NOT make our students and teachers safer. More guns on campuses will expose students and staff to a GREATER RISK of being the victim of an unintentional shooting. Further, HB 3, the experiment of more guns on campuses, is at the expense of our kids social-emotional well-being. Guns on campuses will cause additional anxiety for teachers and students. Hardening schools with surveillance technology and armed school resource officers have proven to have negative social-emotional impact on students as reflected in lower math scores and lower college application rates.

The root-cause of gun violence in our country is EASY ACCESS TO GUNS. Mass murders with firearms are occurring in all places once considered safe. Instead of passing gun sense legislation to protect our schools and our communities, Texas has passed less restrictive gun laws. Instead of addressing the root-cause of our country's gun violence epidemic, Texas elected officials are forcing schools to "harden" campuses to work around the problem of easy access to guns. None of the "solutions" being proposed or implemented are proven to work. In fact, the opposite is true. Armed school resource officers have an increased presence in schools over the last several years, but gun violence in schools has only increased.

If Texas passes HB 3, how will law enforcement know that an armed staff/teacher isn't the "bad guy with a gun," and what if that person is the "bad guy with a gun?" Also, are you asking an armed first grade teacher to shoot a child if the child presents a gun during the school day? If the child is 6 years old, is shooting that child considered self-defense? What if an armed teacher is knocked unconscious by a large, aggressive and angry student and now the school has just provided a gun to a violent person inside the school?

There is a cost to doubling down on bad gun laws. Please don't force our kids to continue to pay for bad gun laws with their lives. Oppose HB 3.

Laura Kennedy

self

Houston, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I attended Texas public schools from K-12 and I have a child in public elementary school in Texas. I do not want my child around loaded guns. I am concerned about this bill resulting in injuries due to staff with insufficient training bearing arms on school grounds. I am especially concerned about the provisions in HB 3 under the "guardian" program which would allow school staff to be armed with minimal training. Please do not pass this bill.

We all saw what happened when professionals at Robb Elementary encountered an actual threat. Making more people with minimal training allowed to carry guns around children is a major disservice parents and children in this state. It puts our children at risk, as there have been multiple cases of school administrators leaving their weapons unattended and children having access to them. It is disturbing that you want more of this, to say the least.

When I was in elementary school in Texas, AR-15s were Federally banned and it was safe to go to school. Schools should be a nurturing environment where kids learn and grow, not a prison-like environments.

Please rethink this dangerous bill. Please do more to protect the lives of children and all of us. Your job should be to protect citizens, not to market firearms.

Kevin Johnson

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Sugar Land, TX

I am strongly against guns in schools. We have seen this does not protect children. Teachers are there to teach. They have enough to do without expecting them to be armed guards too. Vote NO on HB3.

Matthew Ade

Self

Hutto, TX

I oppose guns in school. Please vote no on HB 3.

Bethany Green

Self

New Braunfels, TX

As a parent of school aged children and the wife of a public school teacher, I strongly oppose the HB3 provision that would require an armed presence on school campuses. The presence of guns on campus does not make our children any safer, though it may provide the illusion of safety. It is incomprehensible to me that after the utter failure to protect children and staff at Robb Elementary School from gun violence, this bill proposes more guns in school as a safety measure. How long will it be before an armed teacher or staff member unintentionally leaves a gun unsecured and it is discovered by a student? The children of Texas should not have to fear that there is a gun in their classroom that may or may not be properly secured. Furthermore, having an armed presence on campus may add confusion to the scene during a school shooting as law enforcement officers will not know if the armed staff member is the person shooting. Who will pay for training for staff members to go through gun safety training or to hire an armed safety officer on campus? Public schools already face challenges with adequate funding-let's not place this additional financial burden on them for to provide the illusion of safety.

Kim Bodley

Self, stay at home mom

North Richland Hills, TX

Specifically with regards to Sec 37.0814 concerning armed security officers, I **STRONGLY** oppose arming our teachers/staff with guns. Bringing more guns into our schools is not the solution to creating more safety, not just in my opinion, but based on scientific data. Especially, when the people we are arming with weapons are teachers and staff whose jobs are to **EDUCATE** our children; they should stay in that lane (which is where most of them want to stay). School resource officers who are professionally trained in safety and regularly receive updated training are one thing, but the **VERY** limited training requirements suggested by the Guardian program aren't enough to keep my son (a 1st grader) safe. Please keep my son and his classmates in mind as you vote, knowing that his mom disapproves of this bill and knows, as you do, that arming our teachers would make our schools a scary, more unsafe place to send our kids. Let's do the hard work to get to the root of the problem, not throw this unsafe bandaid fix on it. Thank you for your time and commitment to making the success and safety of our public schools a top priority.

Susan Pollard

self

Porter, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Susan Pollard. My children went through Texas public schools and my son is currently teaching in a Texas public middle school. I ask you to vote no on HB 3.

My children got a great education that prepared them for their jobs- including wanting teaching as a career. I worry about my son as a public school teacher and for the children of my friends, who are not safe in schools. There is incident after incident of children and young adults bringing guns into schools and the horrific school shootings that have happened recently as the past 2 weeks. Our state is not making decisions that keep us safer.

More guns do not make us safer, this is apparent in the stream of guns coming into school and ongoing gun violence that senselessly takes lives. More guns in schools does not make us safer, especially when wielded by teachers and staff with minimal training as is contemplated in this bill.

If you care about students, teachers and parents please listen to them. We have told you we want background checks on every gun sale, we want extreme risk prevention orders, we want the age raised to buy or possess assault style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. We have not asked you to put more guns in schools. That is not what we want.

I ask you to rethink this dangerous bill and vote no to putting more guns in our schools. Thank you.

Nadia Barbot

Self Product manager

Austin, TX

Hello. I am a resident of Austin and was born and raised in Dallas. I encourage the committee members not to send HB 3 out of committee. While I know many of the representatives share concerns with myself and others about increasing safety of students in schools, this is not the way.

1. Students do not need more armed adults around them at school. My son started this year at 4yrs old, in PreK4. At our first parent-teacher conference, his sweet teacher told us that she sometimes had to stop the class and pry my son off of her legs, because he wanted to give her so many hugs. These young students get emotional in many ways and do not need adults that are concerned with managing a loaded weapon on their body as they comfort small or emotional children.
2. There were armed guards at Uvalde and the police came very quickly. Having armed guards present did not save those 19 students and 2 teachers.
3. Research shows that students of color are disproportionately at risk if firearms are present in the classroom. We have other options to keep our students safe without presenting new risks to them.

Please oppose HB 3 and find a bill that encourages community funding to avoid violence or to make automatic weapons less accessible to young people.

Jennifer Arinder

Self, dental hygienist

Kingwood, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB 3

Laura Sparrow, Dr.

Self- Mother

Georgetown, TX

I oppose this bill because it does not adequately address the need for research-backed policies to ensure school safety. Requiring an armed presence on campuses without providing the necessary resources to ensure that the presence is a trained law enforcement official with the knowledge and training to safely carry, use, and store a firearm results in increased safety risks for all students and staff on campus. Teacher and administrators are trained educators, no de facto law enforcement officials. Recently, a school superintendent in Texas a firearm in a school bathroom where it was discovered by a 3rd grader. HB3 will make potentially deadly occurrences like this one more likely. If Texas wants to ensure an armed presence on campus, the state needs to provide the funding for each campus to hire a trained law enforcement officer.

Delight Hogan

Self

Frisco, TX

I vehemently oppose guns in school. Please vote no on HB3.

Karin Knapp

self

Houston, TX

I am a native Texan, lifelong Texas resident, attended Texas public schools K-12 and graduated from Texas A&M University. My husband is a native Texan, lifelong Texas resident, attended Texas public schools K-12 and graduated from the University of Houston. My son is a native Texan, lifelong Texas resident, attended HISD schools K-12 and graduated from UH. I have resided in Houston and Harris County for 43 years and paid taxes for HISD all those years.

My family represents over 50 years of lived public education experience in the state of Texas. I adamantly oppose HB 3. HB 3 mandates an armed presence at each school and allots an insulting 25 cents per child to comply. The only way for most school districts to comply with this mandate is to arm teachers and staff, with a paltry 15-20 hours of training under the guardian plan.

All Texas public schools must not only BE safe, but FEEL safe for students and teachers. Armed teachers will not BE a safe solution and no one in public schools will FEEL safe knowing armed teachers and staff are present, especially those secretly armed. There is no evidence that armed teachers and staff make a school safer. On the contrary, there is a growing number of incidents of armed teachers and staff in schools leaving their loaded weapons and students finding them, including in Rising Star, Texas, this year. Research shows that the mere presence of guns makes children less safe.

The majority of Texans want to keep guns out of the wrong hands by requiring a background check on every gun purchase, red flag laws, secure gun storage and raising the age to buy a "battle rifle" from 18 to 21. Arming teachers and staff in public schools is not on the list of acceptable gun safety measures for the majority of Texans. Please vote no on HB 3. It is dangerous, unproven and would further militarize Texas public schools and traumatize students and teachers. Thank you.

Leslie Morrison

Self

Missouri City, TX

As a mother of three middle school and high school aged children, I am strongly opposed to efforts that would arm teachers and school staff. Research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. During the shooting in Uvalde, highly trained and fully armed law enforcement officers were scared to enter the classroom, yet we expect a teacher or school staff to take down an active shooter.

I know everyone on this committee is working to fix a down-river issue that stems from incredibly dangerous and lax gun safety laws here in Texas. Until those are addressed, we will continue to waste our time on meaningless bills that don't have research to back them up. I hope the representatives will not support this bill leaving the committee.

Ed Perry
Self retired teacher/coach
New Braunfels, TX

Although I am no longer involved actively in public education after my 40-year career, I want to express my vehement opposition to the aforementioned HB3 by Burrows. This is a blatant attempt to force schools to adopt policies that will further endanger the children in public schools and it should not be passed.

German Amador Jr
PAVE (a non-partisan action group)
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Melody Benteler
Self, consultant
Dripping Springs, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. I want our schools to be safer, and adamantly oppose arming teachers. There is zero evidence that arming teachers keeps our schools safer; in fact research shows it increases the likelihood of gun violence.

Francine Fleming, Ms
self
Houston, TX

Please don't arm teachers.....use law enforcement instead....dangerous to arm teachers in a classroom, too much chance for accidental shooting.

Let teachers teach and law enforcement do what they are trained to do.

Maureen O'Connell
Self/social worker; family therapist; former educator and police officer.
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. There is no research or experience that supports increased police presence in schools. Unfortunately, police presence in school settings often leads to the criminalization of our most vulnerable students who need mental health services. Sadly, we do have research and experience which supports the need for increased mental health services which are severely underfunded in our state.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. We should not expect teachers to act as armed guards in our schools, rather we should be increasing their salaries and providing the supports they need to serve our most valuable assets, our children.

Denise Stasio
PAVE
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Maria Burdick
self
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. There is overwhelming research and experience showing that increased police presence in schools does NOT prevent school violence or shootings, nor does it stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022.

I suggest we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Kimberlie Zeller
Self
Richmond, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Kim Zeller, and I'm a native Houstonian. I went to Texas public schools from kindergarten to college and am proud of that fact. I'm raising 2 kids in Fort Bend County now and am scared each day I send them to public school because I worry about them being impacted by a school shooting. Moreover, our state doesn't seem able to make the decisions that we need to keep them safe. More guns do not make schools safer, especially when wielded by teachers or staff with minimal training as is contemplated in this bill. Also, there have been stories of trained, armed personnel leaving guns unattended in school bathrooms where kids and teachers have found them.

If you care about students, if you care about teachers, if you care about parents, then listen to us. We have told you what we want: background checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, raising the age to buy assault-style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. We have not asked you to put more guns into schools because that is not what we want.

I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and vote no on pushing more guns into our schools. Thank you.

Dawn Lawrence
Gun Sense Majority Texas
Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 3, arming teachers and putting more guns in schools. It is not the right way to reduce gun violence in our schools. I truly believe you all have to know that. Please quit putting our children in harms way.

Elizabeth Boyd
Self/Teacher
Houston, TX

As a teacher for twenty years, I do not want additional guns on campus. They have NEVER prevented school shootings and make the job of police harder. Do NOT vote for this bill. It is a distraction from the actual solution and ineffective.

Sheila Blake
Self, Great grandmother
Houston, TX

I oppose guns in schools. More guns = more dead children. Of course it's more NRA profits so you get to choose. Please vote "no" on HB 3. Vote for children.

Patricia McTamanyAllen
self
Kingwood, TX

I oppose guns in school. Guns are the # 1 cause of death of our children. "well meaning teachers" should not be carrying. Example was the teacher who left gun in rest room where a child found it , here in Texas . Please I implore you to vote against this bill

Virginia Brumley
Self
NEW CANEY, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB 3.

Viula Torgerson
Self
Houston, TX

This is a ludicrous idea and will only traumatize children and make it harder for them to learn. I think we should have learned in Uvalde that an armed guard won't stop someone with an automatic rifle and nothing to lose. PLEASE VOTE NO ON THIS UNSAFE AND IRRESPONSIBLE BILL.

Dana Gallegos
Self
Houston, TX

Dear Committee Member,

As a native Texan, parent, and former public school teacher, I urge you to vote no on HB 3. Putting guns in schools will absolutely not make schools any safer. In fact, it will make the already Herculean job of both teachers and police officers even harder.

This bill is a distraction from what we actually need and know to be true to prevent school shootings - background checks, red flag laws, and raising the age to purchase assault-style rifles. Please vote no.

Thank you,
Dana Gallegos

Amy Aceto
Self
Austin, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB 3.

Mary Grace Landrum

self

Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. As a former school trustee in Texas, I am also concerned that this will be another unfunded mandate. School budgets are already stretched with Texas continuing to limit funding for education. We rank 40th among the 50 states in funding to educate our students.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Glenn Javens

Self

Southlake, TX

Overall, I am not in favor of the bill for several reasons.

First, I do not support arming school district officials. Teachers do not support because they want to focus on teaching. You can request polls, and they show that the teachers do not want this added responsibility. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, which are the two largest, do not support arming teachers and staff. The president and executive director of Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents 75 police forces, agree that arming teachers is not a good idea. The more guns that are brought into schools, the more volatility and risk of someone getting injured. The proposed minimum training in the bill is very little relative to the risks from assault rifle attacks and what SROs and police take in training. It will also take time away from preparation of the classroom and provide an unrealistic expectation that the teachers can defeat a gun violence attack.

Secondly, more firearms in a school increase the risk of harm (unintentional as well as intentional) by a factor of three times (Everytown Research & Policy May 1, 2019). Ask proponents of the bill to provide evidence based proof that arming teachers is an effective way to reduce school gun violence.

Third, the Supreme Court conservative justices have consistently ruled that places like schools should not have firearms. Justice Scalia said that the Second Amendment is not an absolute right and restrictions can be placed on guns. Judge Clarence Thomas wrote in 2020 that gun legislation must be measured by the nation's history, not a state's assertion of urgent public safety interests.

Fourth, the amount of proposed funding (e.g. \$10/student, \$15,000/district) is woefully small. A Dallas Morning News webcast last Thursday night included the DISD superintendent and others who said that the amount needed is closer to \$200/student. Please propose more in this bill or request more realistic funding in the state budget. For example, schools need more counselors who are trained to recognize and address potential problems to de-escalate and prevent gun violence. Each school has different needs, and school districts and local families should decide how to best use the funding.

Finally, arming inside the school does not recent gun violence, as seen by the Dallas and Arlington High school shootings, because the gun violence occurred on campus but outside the classroom and class hours. We need more investment in local community programs to talk to youth and give them direction to channel their tendencies towards gun violence into more constructive and less violent ways to act. Some successful programs are Harris County CVIP, Big Mama Safe House in San Antonio, and Fort Worth Violence Intervention and Prevention Program. Please consider adding to the state budget or grants for cities to use on programs like these to reduce neighborhood and gun related violence.

Grace Hedrick

Self

Austin, TX

I'm writing in opposition to HB 3. While I share in the goal of safer schools for our children, I am adamantly opposed to any efforts to arm teachers and school staff. There is no research to support the effectiveness of such measures; in fact, research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. I am a parent and I don't want my child taught, coached or disciplined by an armed person. I have already seen news reports of school administrators leaving weapons in bathrooms, and then those weapons have been found by children. Over 300 well-trained and well-armed police didn't stop the murders at Robb Elementary. Let's stay focused on the security that could keep our children safe.

Stephanie Scherr

-- please select a prefix --

Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Kourtney Benton

Moms Demand Action

Pflugerville, TX

I oppose guns in schools!

Jenny Watson

Moms Demand Action

Dallas, TX

I am against guns in public schools.

Jordan Walker

Self, Management Consultant

Dallas, TX

While I share in the goal of safer schools for our children, I am adamantly opposed to any efforts to arm teachers and school staff. There is no research to support the effectiveness of such measures; in fact, research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. I hope my representative will not support this bill leaving the committee. I am an aunt and I don't want my niece taught, coached or disciplined by an armed person

Kara Deverter
myself
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Kara Deverter, and I was born and raised in Austin, TX. I work in schools providing occupational therapy services, and Robb Elementary was one of my main contracted schools.

My 12 year old attends a public school in San Antonio, but I no longer feel safe sending him there. Our state is not making needed decisions to keep public schools safe. More guns do not make us more safe, especially in schools where there are children AND without safe storage requirements which were already removed from Guardian plans. The data on why more guns won't work is on Everytown.com, but honestly, common sense tells us why guns at schools won't work, especially when handled by someone with 10-20 hours of training who is managing a classroom.

In Uvalde, 376 armed law enforcement could not stop an active shooter. Many of them had long guns that were equally as powerful as the shooter's. Data shows the proposed action would be not only ineffective, but dangerous. However, had there been a ban on selling a long gun to anyone under 21, it would have prevented the Uvalde shooter from purchasing his weapon at Oasis Outback. Please keep your oath and pass a law that would protect our kids. Do you want for your family to be next?

Teresa Humphreys
PAVE
SUGAR LAND, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Lucy Caire
PAVE
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Quynh-Huong Nguyen

Woori Juntos

Houston, TX

House Bill 3 is an important piece of legislation that seeks to improve school safety and security by providing funding for the development and implementation of school safety measures. This bill recognizes the importance of keeping our students safe and creating a secure learning environment.

In recent years, we have unfortunately seen too many incidents of school shootings and other acts of violence that have tragically impacted our communities. This has brought the issue of school safety to the forefront, and underscored the need for action to be taken to ensure that our schools are safe and secure.

House Bill 3 recognizes this need and provides funding to help schools develop and implement safety measures such as security personnel, mental health resources, and facility upgrades. This will allow schools to take concrete steps to improve their safety and security, and help ensure that our students are able to learn in a safe environment.

Furthermore, House Bill 3 recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to school safety, and allows for flexibility in the development and implementation of safety measures. This will enable schools to tailor their safety plans to meet their specific needs and circumstances.

In conclusion, House Bill 3 is an important piece of legislation that will help improve school safety and security. By providing funding for the development and implementation of safety measures, we can ensure that our students are able to learn in a safe and secure environment. I urge all members to support this important bill.

Quynh-Huong Nguyen

Woori Juntos

Houston, TX

while I recognize the importance of school safety and security, I cannot support House Bill 3 in its current form. This bill provides funding for school safety measures without adequately addressing the root causes of violence in our schools.

While school shootings are a very real and tragic issue, we must also recognize that they are just one manifestation of the broader problem of gun violence in our society. Simply increasing security measures in schools does not address the underlying issue of gun violence, and may even create a false sense of security that could make our schools less safe in the long run.

Moreover, House Bill 3 fails to address the root causes of violence in schools, such as mental health issues, social isolation, and bullying. Instead of investing in security measures, we should be investing in mental health resources and programs that address these underlying issues. By providing students with the resources and support they need to address their mental health and social issues, we can create a more positive and peaceful school environment.

Additionally, House Bill 3 may divert funding away from other important educational priorities, such as teacher pay and student programs. While school safety is important, we cannot ignore the other pressing needs of our education system.

In conclusion, while I recognize the importance of school safety and security, I cannot support House Bill 3 in its current form. We must address the root causes of violence in schools, and invest in mental health resources and programs that create a positive and peaceful school environment. I urge all members to reconsider their support of this bill and instead focus on comprehensive solutions to school violence.

Allison Fulton

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote No on HBO 3.

Cathy Elmore
TMO, PAVE
Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Richard Gillespie
Self
Cypress, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Lisa Stone
self
HOUSTON, TX

I join all those Texans urging you to oppose HB 3.
HB 3 would require an armed presence in schools, requiring each public school campus to have armed law enforcement, security guards, or armed staff—which could include teachers!
Arming teachers ignores research that shows the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to our children and teachers. This is a dangerous, ineffective way to address school security; we need solutions based on research and common sense.
I strongly oppose HB 3.

Harper Klamian, Ms
Myself
Pflugerville, TX

I appose guns being in schools

Kelli Fereday
Moms Demand Action
Houston, TX

Data shows that guns on school campuses are dangerous and don't prevent school shootings, so why are we doing this?

I oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB3.

Judy Schockling

Pave

Sugar Land, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Reagan Brendle

self- veterinarian, public health professional

New Braunfels, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Reagan Brendle, and I am a parent to young school-aged children. While I share in the goal of safer schools for our children, I am adamantly opposed to any efforts to arm teachers and school staff. There is no research to support the effectiveness of such measures; in fact research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. I am upset that our children are forced to exist in a world where parents are terrified to send their children to school, and children are forced to repeatedly simulate such terrible circumstances should they arise.

We know that arming teachers is not the answer. We already know the actions that are effective, including performing background checks on every gun sale, implementation of a red flag law, and raising the age to purchase assault style rifles to 21. Please deeply consider the lives of our children and teachers and oppose this dangerous bill. Thank you.

Kathleen Brennan

Self, Retired Educator

Pearland, TX

I am writing because while I share in the goal of making our schools safer for our children, I am adamantly opposed to any efforts to arm teachers and school staff. As a retired teacher of 34 years, I know the inner workings of a classroom well, and there is no room for a gun in the classroom! There are too many ways that things could go tragically wrong. I, and I am sure you as well, am already aware of incidences where a child has found a firearm in the restroom that an armed educator has carelessly left behind. Also, there is no research to support the effectiveness of such measures. In fact, research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. I sincerely hope the committee will not support this bill!

Christina Wilkerson

All Texas children

Houston, TX

I support gun safety laws before supporting this. You can make our children safer by banning the sale of assault rifles and by instituting red flag laws. Stop voting for guns and vote for kids. Guns in schools do not save lives.

James Skopal, Mr

Pave

Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB3. Decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. Sadly, we know this truth all too well from the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities.

Instead, we should be investing in mental health supports, trauma de-escalation practices, and threat assessment processes. Please do not pass this bill but rather focus on non-arming solutions to our gun violence problems.

Alice McCarthy
Self, Writer
Houston, TX

Do NOT put more guns in schools and do NOT base funding on having armed guards in schools. VOTE NO ON THIS BILL.

Camille DiTusa
Self
Kingwood, TX

Guns should NOT be anywhere near students in schools. Vote NO on HB3

Maggie Savage, Mrs
self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your interest in keeping Texas students safe. I am a mom of two elementary-aged children, and I am OPPOSED to HB 3 and efforts to arm teachers and school staff. Research shows that the presence of a gun actually increases the risks posed to children.

Colby Nichols
Leander Independent School District
Austin, TX

Madam Chairwoman,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony regarding House Bill 3. We appreciate Chairman Burrows and his countless hours of work in drafting HB 3. The safety of our students and staff is paramount, and any assistance after the tragedy in Uvalde is welcome.

While we are neutral on the bill, we do have several concerns.

For our district, hiring additional school resource officers makes the most sense because of their ability to take both an offensive and defensive approach with fewer restrictions on sufficient ammunition. An armed guard (SRO) on every campus would cost the district over 5 million dollars annually, and the funding mechanism within the bill does not adequately cover this cost.

There is a shortage of adequately trained individuals willing to serve as school resource officers.
We advocate for an amount closer to \$150/student in the School Safety Allotment.

The Bond proceeds language within the legislation may be problematic for projects not geared towards instruction and already authorized by voters.

This section should only apply to bonds authorized after the effective date of the legislation.

The statute should only apply to new instructional facilities (eliminating athletic, arts, and other facilities which a bond may propose).

The School Safety Center should be the ultimate authority on these issues.

The Texas Education Agency's role should merely be to advise and help implement the directions of the School Safety Center.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this critical legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can further assist you.

Sincerely,

Bruce Gearing, Ed.D
Superintendent

Katherine Celik

Self, RN

Austin, TX

I have three children who attend Austin ISD and I am opposed to this bill. I do not feel safe sending my 3 year old to his school if a gun is going to be stored on campus. After Uvalde, we know that simply arming adults, even trained police, with more guns does not make our students safer.

Gabriela Diaz

self, educator

Kingwood, TX

I've taught in Texas public schools for 16 years. Every training I ever received to prevent or stop school shootings showed me it's a terrible idea to arm anyone but trained law enforcement officers.

1. Will we be arming teachers with AR-15s? The police force in Uvalde hesitated in engaging the shooter because of his weapon. If we're actually talking about being able to take down school shooters, they usually have AR-15s. Will our 2nd grade music teachers and attendance clerks be armed with AR-15s?

2. There is no evidence to show that arming teachers, staff, or volunteers stops or deters shooters. There is plenty of evidence of teachers, staff, and even a SUPERINTENDENT leaving guns that could endanger students or staff (list of specific examples can be found on former Congresswoman Gaby Gifford's site under incidents of guns mishandled in schools).

3. When the police arrive, they don't have time to discern who is a "good guy" with a gun, and who is a shooter. Districts like New Caney ISD (who plans to implement Guardians) haven't even collaborated with their local police departments about this yet. When the police come, no one should be holding a weapon.

4. Law enforcement trains an incredible amount of hours to stay proficient in their work. No teacher or staff in the state of Texas has time to keep up with the type of combat, military training needed to shoot down a hallway crowded with hundreds of students (see Atascocita High School) in panic.

We know what helps prevent these shootings: requirements and strong endorsements/PSAs about secure storage of firearms at home, so kids can't access them. Criminal background checks on every gun sale. Raising the age to purchase weapons of war or banning them altogether. Do not further endanger our Texas students and teachers with MORE GUNS. You will lose teachers over this.

Jennifer Johnson

Self -- writer

Houston, TX

I am writing to oppose HB 3's provisions requiring armed security on campus, even in cases where that will require arming teachers, administrators and staff. This will inevitably be the case in schools that cannot afford a full time school resource officer and/or local law enforcement presence. Following Uvalde, we ought to have learned that this is not the answer to school safety. More guns in schools make us less safe, not more safe. Thank you for your time.

Keli Stalder

Moms Demand Action

New Caney, TX

I oppose guns in schools in any capacity. Arming adults with minimal training is not the answer. Please vote no on HB 3.

Paige Lawrence

Self

Austin, TX

I greatly oppose guns in schools. Please vote no on HB3.

karen Harris Odama

self

Austin, TX

I believe arming teachers with guns to protect our school populations is not an appropriate response. Teachers generally do not want this added responsibility and they are not paid enough for what they are already asked to do presently. This will exacerbate the problem with finding good teachers to teach our future generations. Most importantly, it will not get any guns out the hands of school shooters. We need to address the root of the problem and first and foremost, do not let these people have deadly gun weapons. How?: take away military assault weapons or at minimum not make them available to an 18 year old. Please tell me who needs this kind of weapon if they are not engaged in military combat officially? Comprehensive background checks, red flag laws, are no brainers common sense starter approaches. Of course, mental health resources are needed, but history has shown us that many of these shooters have not ever been connected to that network prior to engaging in deadly violence. We have laws and regulations for society well being. It IS time to directly respond to this threat with new laws and regulations. This is your duty. Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Beneski, Dep. Exec. Director

Texas Association of School Administrators

Austin, TX

Madam Chair & Members

The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony “on” HB 3 by Chairman Burrows. The health and safety of students and school district employees is of paramount concern to our membership.

As filed, HB 3 would require every campus to have a minimum of one armed security officer during school hours who could be school district police or resource officers, or employees who have completed certain training and can carry on their person on a campus. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of qualified police officers and security personnel to fill law enforcement jobs currently in existence. School districts across the state would struggle or simply couldn’t comply with this requirement due to the shortage, which are likely more prevalent in small rural areas.

It was noted at a recent senate hearing that costs to hire police officers for campuses can range from \$75-\$100 an hour due to demand and supply issues. We recommend setting implementation goals for this type of requirement over several years to allow school districts time to find and hire armed security officers as the state and local law enforcement agencies seek to remedy the shortage.

We appreciate the initial funding provided in HB 3 as filed but know the amount must be increased so that districts can comply with all state requirements and community safety needs. During several interim hearings, school superintendents provided testimony asking the legislature to increase the school safety allotment from the current \$9.72 per student to \$150- \$200 per student and include a minimum floor for smaller schools, which will likely exceed the allotted \$15,000 per campus in HB 3. Language related to increasing funding to the School Safety Allotment (SSA) also allows for proration as needed. We have concerns that this language could authorize TEA to lessen the amount school districts receive under the SSA without a legislative dictate and we seek clarification of that provision.

TASA appreciates HB 3 provisions that provide confidentiality of information related to monitoring school district safety and security practices to ensure bad actors are unable to access documents as districts work toward meeting all new safety and security guidelines/requirements.

Section 6 of the bill states, “Any proceeds from bonds must be used by ISDs to come into compliance with the school safety standards set forth herein before any other money from bonds can be spent otherwise.” This is not a feasible requirement for bonds that already have dedicated expenditures. We ask that consideration be given to new language that allows districts to incorporate bonds after the effective date of this bill.

TASA applauds Chairman Burrows in his efforts to help districts provide safe campuses for the schoolchildren, teachers and other vital staff. We look forward to working with you as HB 3 moves through the process.

Kathy Dunham

Self

San Marcos, TX

I oppose guns in schools. They have no place around children. Vote no to HB3

Margarita Arevalo

Self

Houston, TX

I oppose HB 3. Students feel secure in schools because the facilities are clean and functional. They interact with friends and teachers. They share meals together and participate in school events. Funding for public schools need to go to these activities. There is no need to militarize our schools, students, teachers and staff. Students need to learn math, reading and science. They don't need to learn survival skills. Teachers need to prepare to deliver learning materials and subjects to students. They don't need to prepare our schools for war zones. Vote No on HB 3.

Cori Ferraro

Self

San Antonio, TX

My name is Cori Ferraro. I am raising 3 school age children and I oppose this bill and any bill that puts more guns in schools. I urge you to vote no. Evidence has proven that the presence of guns near children does not make them safer. In fact, armed security personnel as we have seen are ineffective in stopping active shooters. Furthermore, there have been many instances of guns left in places unsecured near students. Finally, making teachers and staff who are not trained in law enforcement or sufficient firearm training is surely a recipe for harm. I urge you to stop this dangerous bill.

Tara Watson

Self. Engineer

Houston, TX

I oppose guns in our schools. Research shows that guns in schools make schools more dangerous. Please vote against hb 3

Roger Daily
self
Kingwood, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I am asking you to vote NO.

My name is Roger Daily and I have 3 children who graduated from Texas public schools. They each got an excellent education that has enabled them to pursue their interests at leading universities. As someone who worked in arts-in-education, I have many friends and colleagues in the profession.

I am worried about our teacher's safety and that of our children. Our state is not making decisions that keep teachers and children safe. More guns do not make us safe, as we see in the daily occurrence of children bringing guns to schools and the horrific school shootings that have occurred as recently as the past 2 weeks. More guns in schools do not make us safer, especially when wielded by staff and teachers with minimal training as is contemplated in this bill. I find it unacceptable to put the burden on teachers and administrators. These are amateurs at protection in a high stress situation. With the surplus this year why is money not being spent to make sure that all school entrances are locked automatically with cameras monitoring doors.

You know what we want. We want background checks on every gun sale, we want red flag laws, we want you to raise the age to buy or possess an assault style rifle from 18 to 21 years old. We do not want more guns in schools.

I ask you to rethink this dangerous bill and vote no to HB 3 and pushing more guns in schools. Thank you.

Roger Daily

Taylor Trevino
self (organizer)
Austin, TX

As a former educator and a product of Texas public schools, I strongly urge the legislature to oppose this bill. Seeing guns on campus do not make most children, teachers, and staff feel safer. Rather, it instills fear; militarizing our schools is not the solution. As a teacher, I need my students to be calm and feel safe in my classroom so they have the best chance to learn, and this will not happen if they know an armed officer is roaming the halls, ready to shoot at the first notice of a perceived threat. I urge the committee to seek out expert knowledge on this issue on proven, effective ways of making schools safer that do not include bringing deadly weapons onto campus.

Kathryn Atkins
TX Moms Making Decisions
Austin, TX

Research shows that more guns on campuses do not make them safer, and increases risk of injury or accidental access to a gun. I oppose HB 3.

Angela Iwu
Texan and Moms Demand Action
Manvel, TX

Teachers are already burden with the education of students and in many cases they're counseling and care. We do not need to add more for them to be concerned with. This I why we have a teacher shortage - we keep giving them more to do instead of more help. Also more guns do not equal more safety.

Arlene Bjugstad
Central American Minors Working Group
Seabrook, TX

I firmly believe that school safety and preventing violence in schools is of the utmost importance. However, decades of research and experience have shown that increased police presence in schools does not prevent school violence or shootings or stop them when they occur. This proved true during the tragedy in Uvalde in 2022, where the public received disheartening information about the inadequate police response to the active shooter.

Instead, the presence of armed police is linked to greater casualties during these incidents. Police presence has also been shown to result in disproportionate criminalization of our most marginalized students, including students of color and students with disabilities, by increasing rates of exclusionary discipline, arrests and criminal charges, and uses of force in response to age-appropriate behavior. Instead of pouring money into the reactive strategy of police in schools, we should invest in preventative strategies that address the root causes of violence, including:

- ? Relationship-building among students and teachers to prevent conflict, and when conflict does occur, holding students meaningfully accountable for their actions and repairing the harm they caused.
- ? Mental health supports. This includes hiring more school counselors, psychologists, and social workers.
- ? Trauma-informed practices to de-escalate situations where a student may be reacting in fight-or-flight mode based on trauma they have suffered.
- ? Full implementation of the threat assessment process the legislature passed in 2019 so that schools can proactively identify warning signs and intervene with supports and services before violence occurs.

HB 3 would also enable the commissioner of education to take action under Ch. 39A, including assignment of a conservator or appointment of a board of managers, if a school district fails to comply with safety and security requirements. This is an antidemocratic, punitive mechanism that has not resulted in true improvements either in Texas school districts or in other states, and I oppose the potential for increased privatization of our public schools that it opens up.

Martha Garcia
Self, mother with student
Dallas, TX

I oppose HB 3.

HB 3 would require an armed presence in schools, requiring each public school campus to have armed law enforcement, security guards, or armed staff—which could include teachers!

Arming teachers ignores research that shows the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to our children and teachers.

There are 3 things to keep in mind. One, there have already been incidents of irresponsible school officials leaving their weapons in bathrooms where young students have found them and those young kids could have hurt themselves or others. Two, there have been studies that show that well-trained police have hit their targets, under pressure, 35% of the time. That's more than six out of 10 rounds fired were misses. Teachers, who would not have the extensive training and practice that police have, would, statistically, be ineffectual in taking down a gunman and would likely hit innocents. And three, with guards, teachers, and staff with guns, who is to know the good guys from the bad?

SB 3 would be adding more danger, rather than resolving the issue of shootings on campuses.

Kara Masharani
self, website designer
Sugar Land, TX

This law will make our schools more dangerous, not safer. As a mom of two boys in public school and a native Texan, I urge you to vote against it.

Tiffany Johnson

Self: Author, Parent, Long COVID disabled

Austin, TX

My children have attended two schools in Austin and neither have had adequate facilities (hvac problems, water safety, flooding/drought erosion) or enough funding for educators and administrators.

My oldest child is a 504 student and can't even get her homework or lessons supplied to her in the formats which best serve her education with a moderate vision and neuropathy disability.

There are rats and snakes in their schools, leaking ceilings, busted desks and laughable salaries paid in most Texan public school.

Texas has valued gun ownership and gun rights over education and investing directly in the futures of millions of children for far too long and the statistics prove this to be true.

Texas ranked # 40 for education levels out of all US states and territories despite being ranked number 17 for quality of education, a statistic strengthened only by private, costly, and most importantly non-public school or tax-payer-funded education.

I know submitting these comments to this committee is a lot like talking to an ignorant brick wall, but more guns in schools is not the answer now, it has never been the answer, and it will never be the answer.

Ever since the GOP leading Texas decided guns are more valued than education, we've been unable to separate educational facilities from the threat of guns.

This has been a REAL CRISIS for decades and it will continue to do so while guns are considered far less threatening within all other borders of this state.

This body has the power to actually change the safety and governance of future generations and it refuses to acknowledge it as proven by its actions. Approving this bill would continue to drain funding desperately needed for education and instead put one more person in a school with a weapon than should be necessary.

That is exactly WHY we are speaking out against this bill. More thought, care, preservation and continuation of weapon rights and ownership is driven by this legislative body than has collectively been given to the crucial and life-saving programs, treatments and communal resources which have repeatedly proven to lower the risk of not only gun violence, but ALL violence.

If this state continues to choose to put weapons in the hands of what is currently leading to be one of the least educated populations in the US, we unfortunately will all continue to feel the strain of underfunding throughout every other cornerstone of a healthy, functional and sustainable society. We will all continue to fear the next Uvalde and we will continue to be filled with disgust, shame, and rage at the fact that even 376 HIGHLY and RECENTLY trained officers couldn't intervene on the behalf of 19 students and two teachers; tax payer funded, specialized police training had preceded Uvalde by less than a year and not a single penny of it showed up to do the only job required by officers.

Stop the foolishness. Stop pretending you don't know these things to be true. Stop this bill!!!

Heather Kennedy

Self

Dripping Springs, TX

I completely agree that schools should be safe places for students and staff. That's why I am opposed to HB 3 and its requirement for an armed person in every school. There are a number of reasons this is a bad idea. First, even armed law enforcement haven't stopped the worst school shootings in our country. In Parkland, Florida, there was an armed sheriff's deputy who did not engage with the shooter. And of course, at Robb Elementary, we know the gunman was able to pass by an officer on school grounds and get into the building. And once there were hundreds of armed LEOs on the scene, they still didn't help save any lives. Second, studies show that even well trained LEOs under fire have an accuracy rate less than 20% (studies vary, but to get to something closer to a 30% rate, they need to be within 7 yards of their target). Assuming that not all districts will be able to afford a well trained School Resource Officer for every campus (again, proven not to help anyway), that means arming at least one member of the faculty/staff. If cops can hardly ever hit their target in a high-stress situation, how do we expect a teacher or administrator to do it? They don't have nearly the same training or practice. They could miss the assailant and shoot an innocent person instead. Third, when police arrive on the scene, there is no way for them to know that the person with the gun is the "good guy" put there to keep the school "safe". So any staff member who decides to carry at school has the potential to confuse the police and maybe get shot themselves. Fourth (not finally, as the reasons this is a bad idea are countless), I've read story after story of administrators, teachers, and even LEOs who have left their guns in restrooms or other places where they were found by students. If you aren't responsible enough to keep your gun on you, you have proven you aren't responsible enough to keep our children safe. The idea that having someone armed on every campus will keep kids safer is just security theater, like taking off your shoes at the airport. Metal detectors in schools are theater, too, but they aren't going to get anyone killed. Anytime a gun is on a campus, that campus is less safe. On a personal level, as a parent, I wouldn't want my own children in a class with an armed teacher. Students know how to push buttons. Teaching is already stressful. How long until we see a frustrated teacher pull a gun on a student? How long until we see a student overpower a teacher and take their gun from them? We can make schools safer. We can help students before they ever get to the point they think of shooting up a school. But you have to invest in counselors. You have to teach frustration tolerance and empathy and kindness. More guns cannot be the answer. And if HB 3 passes, there will be more close calls and tragedies than disasters averted. Please strike this requirement for armed people on every campus. It will get kids hurt.

Jennifer Erickson

Self as a parent of child in public school

Fort Worth, TX

I am part of the majority of Texans who want gun safety to be a priority this session.

My daughter is in third grade in Keller ISD and she's been doing active shooter drills since preschool. She's never known a time before them. It angers me that we can't seem to solve this problem so our kids don't have to live in fear.

Each morning as I drive to school the thought crosses my mind of what if today is the day something happens at my daughter's school. I note her clothes and I say a little prayer for her safety every morning at drop off. I have advocated with her school district to prepare and learn from the lessons of other communities. Every time I see a news alert about another school shooting, I hold my breath looking for where it was. Just today there was another school shooting, this time in Tennessee with three children killed.

That the problem hasn't been solved decades after Columbine is a sad reflection on our country. I am eager to have better options than hoping the kids practicing to be quiet in the drills will work in a real situation. It's unfair and unrealistic to place that burden on our children. We have to do a better job to protect our kids.

However, HB 3 takes things too far. I am opposed to this bill for several reasons.

Studies have shown that people's effectiveness to shoot a gun with precision decreases by 20 % when under stress. A teacher, potentially faced with a current or former student with a gun in a classroom with students they care about - trying to protect everyone? That's a stress no one should be put under and frankly I worry that more will be hurt if they had a gun. The level of training for the programs in this bill are woefully inadequate and far less than police standards. If guns are going to be in schools there needs to be extensive training, ongoing practice, and serious storage rules and restrictions.

The presence of a gun inherently raises the likelihood a child could be hurt or killed at school. And where would staff be securing the gun while surrounded by students? We've already seen three instances just in Texas of adults who are carrying a gun on school grounds leaving it lying around for students to find. Thankfully no child has been harmed - yet - but adding more guns will increase those risks. As a parent I should know if there is a gun in my child's classroom. I shouldn't have to wonder. I ask before playdates - why shouldn't I know about at school where she spends the majority of her time?

Will there be any requirements for all districts to arm staff with consistency, safeguards or using evidence-based techniques that have elsewhere?

We can all agree that the problem of school safety is an unfortunate reality. We must take action, but introducing more weapons isn't the solution as we saw in the response in Uvalde. Please take time to look into violence prevention programs.

Our children and Texas families are depending on you.

Courtney Petersen

Courtney Guess Counseling

Austin, TX

I oppose HB3. Arming teachers ignores research that shows the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to our children and teachers. There have been 3 incidents of armed staff leaving a gun in a bathroom this school year in Texas; 2 of the guns were found by 3rd graders. There is also zero evidence that arming teachers will make a campus safer.

If you look at what happened at Robb Elementary in Uvalde there were close to 400 officers who arrived on the scene and that still did not make a difference and 21 lives were lost. The issue is not needing to have armed guards on campus but needing to remove or limit access to automatic weapons. If you are unwilling to do this at least consider allowing parents in this state to have a voice on what they want. 7 out of 10 parents are opposed to having a gun on campus. These are our kids lives and we need to have a say on what needs to be done in this state.

Kathleen Brennan

Individual

Pearland, TX

While I appreciate your efforts to increase safety in our schools, I do not think HB 3 meets that goal. This bill will increase the number of guns on our school campuses and in many cases cause teachers to become armed. As a retired special education teacher of 34 years, I can tell you this is not a good idea. Classrooms are busy places with plenty of activity. Teachers have enough things to monitor in order to keep children safe without having to worry about a firearm accidentally getting into a child's hands. And, there is no evidence to show that the presence of guns on campus keep children safer. I am adamantly opposed to HB 3 and respectfully urge the committee members not to support it.

Lisa Allen
Self
Austin, TX

Dear Committee members,

My name is Lisa Allen and I'm the mother of 3 kiddos who attend public schools in 78739 zip code. I strongly disagree with this bill and urge you to vote NO on this bill.

Casen Combs, Mrs
self- writer
San Antonio, TX

As a mother of two school aged children, I would like to record my strong opposition to HB 3. I believe that this bill would not keep my children or their valued educators safer, but would in fact put them in more danger.

Within the current landscape of Texas school safety, we know that this bill would force many schools to arm teachers because they're unable to secure a school resource officer or law enforcement officer at every campus. But not only do 76% of k-12 teachers not want to be armed, the presence of the firearm they would be required to have introduces a lethal game of chance to them and our students. Any instance of such a firearm not being securely stored - much like the incident earlier this year in Rising Star - allows for any student or educator to find that gun and use it. The presence of a firearm triples the risk of death by suicide and doubles the risk of death by homicide. When the mental health crisis is so often referred to in the gun violence debate, why introduce a means to end a life to our most vulnerable population? A population research repeatedly finds to be struggling disproportionately with mental health? Not to mention the safety of our youngest Texans, our elementary school children, for whom unintentional shootings in the home are already all too common. Why introduce the same threat into their schools in the name of safety?

I also am perplexed that given the hundreds of armed law enforcement officers at Robb Elementary, many of whom have stated their fear of the military grade weapon used by the shooter that day, that we are still assuming the presence of a good guy with a gun would save our students and educators. This myth has been disproven to devastating effect. If hundreds of armed law enforcement officers cannot prevent a massacre, how can we expect educators, whose primary wish is the educate in a safe environment, to do so with only a few hours of training? Far few hours than the law enforcement officers at Robb Elementary received?

This bill attempts to prevent another massacre like the one at Robb Elementary or Santa Fe HS. But the premise is misguided, unfounded by research, and disproven by real life events. What it will actually do is provide more opportunities for gun violence in our schools, put our most valued populations at risk, and force our educators into a role they never wished to inhabit. I am begging the committee to reconsider the data and options available to enhance school safety and to choose another route to keep our schools safer.

carol Saucedo
self
Austin, TX

I am a parent, gma, substitute teacher and plead with you to vote AGAINST this proposed bill. There is no evidence that arming teachereswill reduce school shootings.

I live in Williamson County Texas and I vote for candidates who care more about protecting children and teachers than they do their own political ambitions.

We're counting on you to be courages and implement evidence based methods to reduce school violence.

Melanie Greene
self, technology consultant
AUSTIN, TX

I'm a fourth generation Texan who supports the 2nd amendment and responsible gun ownership. My husband and I and our 2 daughters all attended Texas public schools. I am writing to ask you to vote no on HB3. This bill will tie additional school safety funding to armed guards on school campuses. You don't get the funding if you don't have someone with a gun at your school. Data shows that guns on school campuses are dangerous and don't prevent school shootings, so why are we doing this? When a mass shooter terrorized the school community in Uvalde, there were 376 law enforcement officials present. That didn't save those 21 lives. This is just one example. What WOULD save lives is raising the age to buy a firearm to 21 and background checks on every gun sale. Please vote no on HB3. Texans don't want more guns in schools.

Erin Cmerek
Self
Richardson, TX

As a mother of 4 and an ED clinical therapist at a children's hospital tasked with performing mental health assessments on a daily basis, I find this bill to be dangerous and unsupported by research. I do not know not 1 provider in the entirety of psychiatry or medicine that works in an ED that would support the idea of MORE guns. We see first hand everyday the devastation that guns create. Please, as a desperate mother, consider the plights of the professionals on the front lines when you discuss this bill. Nothing good will come from it and there is too much to lose.

Heidi Magid
Self
Austin, TX

Teachers should not be armed

Mark Wiggins
Association of Texas Professional Educators
Austin, TX

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) offers the following neutral input on HB 3 by Rep. Burrows, which would require at least one armed security officer on each school campus. School safety is one of ATPE's top legislative priorities. ATPE's 2022-23 Legislative Program, which was unanimously adopted by members of the 2022 House of Delegates, states the following:
"ATPE supports measures to ensure all educational settings are safe and secure environments where students, school employees, and volunteers can be productive."

HB 3 would allow a district to satisfy this requirement with either a school district peace officer, a school resource officer, a commissioned peace officer employed as security personnel, a school marshal, or an armed school employee.

ATPE believes the decision to permit certain employees to carry a handgun is best decided by local school districts. The commitment to carry a deadly weapon for security purposes must be voluntarily entered into by each individual employee with full knowledge of their responsibilities and without undue pressure from administrators. In order to guard against undue pressure, ATPE suggests adding the following language to Sec. 37.0814:

(c) A school district may not compel a school district employee to serve as an armed security officer in order to satisfy the requirements under this section.

We believe this change would facilitate the objective of Section 4 of HB 3 while safeguarding against a school employee being directed to serve as an armed security officer in order to comply with this section.

Nothing is more important than the safety of Texas children. HB 3 is an important step in that direction and ATPE appreciates the opportunity to work with the Texas Legislature to make schools safer for students and staff. We respectfully ask your consideration of this recommendation, which we believe will make the bill stronger and more efficacious. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.

Peter Magid, MR

Self, computer programmer.

Austin, TX

I wish to register my dissent to this proposal. I don't believe that arming teachers is the appropriate way to handle school safety. Armed security within the school must be performance by persons well qualified in the use of guns and protection, such as police or trained security personnel.

Donna Schmidt

Myself

Dallas, TX

I oppose this bill. I teach music lessons in middle and high schools in Lewisville. If 400 trained officers and security personnel couldn't or wouldn't stop an armed teacher, why should we trust anyone with less training. There IS NO DATA to support this approach and without funding, those who are armed will not be qualified.

Gurlene Amin

Self

Sugar Land, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly oppose this bill. Time and time again it has been shown that the number of guns in schools do not make our children and school staff safer. They do in fact put them in more danger. More guns in the hands of trained and untrained people is not the answer to keeping schoolchildren and teachers and support staff safer. Please do not turn our schools into war zones.

Thank you.

Brenda Thompson

self - food writer and photographer

SUGAR LAND, TX

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Brenda Thompson. I have lived in Texas for most of my life--over four decades and am the mom to two young adults.

My husband and I went to public schools from kindergarten through college as have our children. We believe in the strength of our public education system however, I worry for the safety of our students attending public school.

More guns do not make us more safe, as is proven time and time again, especially when wielded by teachers or staff who have been given minimal training as is contemplated in this bill.

If you care about students, teachers and parents, then I URGE you to listen to them. We have told you over and over what we want: background checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, raising the age to buy assault style rifles from 18 to 21 years old. We have not asked you to put more guns in schools, because it's not what we want!

I understand you all will be meeting soon to discuss this bill but I wanted to send you my message just in case it gets to you in time. I urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and to vote no on pushing more guns into our schools. Thank you.

Karen Mahoney
Self-CPA/Moms Demand Action
Austin, TX

Hello, my name is Karen Mahoney and I live in Austin. I am writing today because I want safer schools for our children, but am adamantly opposed to any efforts to arm teachers and school staff. There is no research to show this will help; in fact, research shows that the presence of a gun increases the risks posed to children. This is not the answer! If we need to fund anything for school safety, it's in more funding for guidance counselors and resources on campuses to help with mental health issues our children are obviously facing today.

And there are other ways to help reduce the gun violence in our state, such as checks on every gun sale, a red flag law, and one that I feel very strongly about, is raising the age to buy an assault style rifle from 18 to 21 years of age. I mean, think about it, you can't buy a beer or cigarettes until you are 21, but you can buy a AR-15? I am a gun owner and I, along with the majority of gun owners in Texas, firmly believe that none of these things will hinder purchasing and/or owning a gun. And I most firmly believe that putting more guns in our schools will not make them safer!

I sincerely urge you to rethink this dangerous bill and to vote NO on pushing more guns into our schools. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Karen Mahoney
Texas Voter

Diane McMichael
Self
Austin, TX

I've read in the last few months about several instances of principals/security leaving guns in unsecured in schools. Accidents are much more likely to happen than a teacher protecting students against an active shooter. Trained officers have an accuracy rate of 18% in gunfights, yet we are considering arming teachers and staff who will no doubt have much less training? This will not keep our children safer and in fact, will make it more dangerous for them. I strongly oppose HB3. Here is an excellent resource on why guns in schools is dangerous and unnecessary: <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/guns-in-public/guns-in-schools/>

Cynthia Cole
Self/ mother
Austin, TX

Proposals offered by the gun lobby to arm teachers and repeal gun-free school zones laws are dangerous and counter-productive.¹² There is no reason to believe such proposals will help curb those rare instances of gun violence at school. Teachers are not trained law enforcement officers—their purpose is to be educators and role models. Further, the gun lobby's claim that "gun-free zones" invite mass shootings has been thoroughly debunked by research showing that the overwhelming majority—nearly 90%—of all high-fatality gun massacres since 1966 have occurred wholly or partly in locations where civilian guns were allowed or there was armed security or law enforcement present.¹³ Gun violence prevention measures for our schools should focus on educating kids and parents about the dangers of firearms and importance of safe storage, rather than on arming teachers.

Julie Marinucci
self - Tax Accountant
Houston, TX

My name is Julie Marinucci and I live in Houston. I went to public schools here in Houston and graduated from UT Austin. I am opposed to HB 3 that would require all schools to have an armed law enforcement officer or armed teacher or staff member. Pushing more guns into schools does not make students and teachers safer. In fact, students are less safe because of the potential access to that loaded gun carried by a teacher or staff member that may be left in a restroom, a desk drawer, cafeteria, library etc ... or due to an unintentional discharge. These are not hypotheticals. They have already happened in Texas schools. We need gun sense in Texas schools, not more nonsense. If you are serious about making school's safer, then follow the data and 1. raise the age of those that can own a "battle rifle" or assault rifle from 18 years old to at least 21 and 2. enact stronger laws requiring gun owners to LOCK UP THEIR GUNS. With the right to own a gun comes responsibility. No child or student should have easy access to guns in their home, a relative's home or in a vehicle.

Amanda Brownson
Texas Association of School Business Officials
AUSTIN, TX

The Texas Association of School Business Officials appreciates the commitment to keeping students safe shown in House Bill 3. Our members have spent considerable time over the past several years revising school safety plans to address threats that arise in an ever-changing environment. Additional resources from the state are a welcome addition to these efforts. We are registering "on" the bill because of a couple of concerns that we hope can be addressed as the bill moves forward.

Section 4 of the bill requires districts to hire, for every campus, at least one school district peace officer, a school resource officer, a commissioned peace officer employed as security personnel under Section 37.081; a school marshal; or an armed school district employee who has completed school safety training provided by a qualified handgun instructor certified in school safety. Our members have shared that a qualified armed security officer would cost between \$65,000 and \$80,000 per campus. Our members have also expressed difficulty in finding officers to hire, noting that local law enforcement is also struggling in some cases to fill vacancies. The funding in Section 11 of the bill, while helpful, falls well short of what is needed to hire the staff required.

We recommend that funding be increased and that districts have latitude to address local needs in alternative ways (for example, by sharing officers between nearby campuses or by cooperating with other local law enforcement to ensure campus safety) in cases when that might be more effective.

Finally, we recommend that the language in Section 6 of the bill requiring that bond proceeds be used to come into compliance with school safety standards before they can be used for other purposes be modified to exempt already-approved projects where the debt has not yet been issued. Under federal law, bond proceeds must be used to address projects approved by voters before they can be used for any other purpose. We recommend modifying the bill to address future bond elections, but not currently authorized but unissued obligations.

Kaitlin Ohalloran
Self physical therapist
Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. There is not any specifics on training that the people who carry will have to go through. Is it police officers for each and every school or random volunteers. Bringing more weapons into school will not protect students. How many officers responded to Uvalde with guns? Did that stop effectively the shooter from taking innocent lives NO it did not. Effective measures would include raising the age to purchase AR weapons or also safe storage laws for guns. Also better background checks. Please strongly reconsider this bill. I am a survivor of gun violence. I lost my Dad to homicide and my mom committed the crime then committed suicide in 2017. Being a survivor of gun violence is hard, every single time someone dies from gun violence the ripple effect is large. It affects so many. Brining insecure weapons into a school to protect the children is not the answer. I strongly oppose this bill.

Jennifer Lynskey

Self

Austin, TX

Guns have no place in our nation's schools. By contrast, laws that prohibit guns in schools and impose harsh penalties for gun possession help keep students and educators safe. The presence of guns in higher education classrooms also burdens the First Amendment right to academic freedom of speech—guns can impede the candid discourse that is critical to the collegiate experience. Allowing guns on campus poses a grave threat to people employed by schools as well, making the workplace more dangerous for university staff and faculty.

Proposals offered by the gun lobby to arm teachers and repeal gun-free school zones laws are dangerous and counter-productive. There is no reason to believe such proposals will help curb those rare instances of gun violence at school. Teachers are not trained law enforcement officers—their purpose is to be educators and role models.

Further, the gun lobby's claim that "gun-free zones" invite mass shootings has been thoroughly debunked by research showing that the overwhelming majority—nearly 90%—of all high-fatality gun massacres since 1966 have occurred wholly or partly in locations where civilian guns were allowed or there was armed security or law enforcement present.

Guns in schools makes it more dangerous for our kids - not safer. We do not need more guns. We need better legislation and education. Measures like promoting safe storage!!!

Do what's right - and safe - for our kids. No more guns in schools!

Lynn McConnell

Self/Retired

Austin, TX

More guns at schools, is not the answer. That has been proven. At Uvalde there were almost 400 guns there & they DID NOT PREVENT the slaughter of innocent children. In Florida, there was an armed guard there, & he DID NOT PREVENT the slaughter of innocent children.

What would better address the issue, is to get assault guns off the streets. At Uvalde, law enforcement personnel were afraid to approach the shooter because he had an assault rifle. What would prevent this happening in the future? More guns at schools, is not the answer! Use the money instead to buy back assault weapons. Ban ownership of such. Reward those that alert law enforcement to people that illegally possess assault weapons. Be positive in dealing the gun violence at schools, not reactionary!

Linda Wilson

Myself

San Antonio, TX

HB #3. School safety funding should not depend on adding more guns to schools. Another mass shooting at a private Christian School in Tennessee. INstead, Take away the AK-47s and the high caliber ammo. Don't add more guns to schools.

Darin Moore

Self; attorney

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. This will allow any armed person to be around a school in an effort to "protect" children. Arming teachers and civilians will not make us or our children safer.

Theresa Williams, Superintendent

Plano Independent School District

Plano, TX

Plano ISD opposes HB 3 due to the reason that the cost to implement far exceeds funding provided; Additionally, we have concerns about the lack of availability to find guards and officers.

Jennifer Jefferson

Self, director

Austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to the provision to have armed responders on every campus. This measure is not supported by research, is costly, and is dangerous to our communities.

Sara Ruffin

Self - teacher

Lago Vista, TX

As a Texas public school educator, I firmly believe in keeping all guns OUT of our schools. Statistics show that armed officers do not prevent crime—even the police force at Robb Elem. stood by idly despite being armed. Do not tie funding to guns in our schools. Spend time legislating gun reform and keep machines of war out of the hands of civilians instead.

Michelle Herskowitz

Myself

Houston, TX

My name is Michelle Herskowitz and I oppose HB 3. Even though some of the bill provisions have merit, I'm concerned that HB 3 will require an armed presence in all Texas public schools. Any legislation that puts more guns in schools -- including the potential to arm educators and school staff -- is wrong and even dangerous. Such a state mandate robs local districts of control, by potentially forcing them to adopt the so-called school marshal or 'guardian' plans, given this bill is underfunded as schools struggle with budget issues. Since most districts in Texas have not enacted these plans in the five years they have been available, it's easy to assume this is not something they want, especially given the current staffing crisis in education and the fact that educators have repeatedly voice opposition to being armed. Beyond these factors, there is no evidence that arming teachers or even school resource officers prevent school shootings. So, we're only endangering students and staff when adults mishandle guns on school campuses (which happens regularly). Please reject HB 3!

David Galvan

Self - retired city administrator

Austin, TX

I am opposed to arming school teachers. If guns were the answer to this national illness, the United States would be the safest country in the world. The statistics for someone with military or police training under direct gunfire hitting their target is extremely low, much less a teacher with little to no training. We deserve better than this!! THERE IS A SOLUTION OUT THERE!!! DON'T ALLOW CIVILIANS ACCESS TO MILITARY STYLE WEAPONS!!!

Hayley Belveal

Self - parent

Austin, TX

Please do not allow MORE guns near my child. I do NOT support the carrying of weapons of anyone other than trained police officers to be at the school. It allows for more opportunity. Each person carrying a weapon is a risk. I don't know their mental status or training. What if a child takes their weapon when they aren't paying attention? Guns are NOT the solution to GUNS!!!

Mary Price

Self

Webster, TX

I strongly oppose The proposed bill requiring people within schools to be armed. I think it's one of the dumbest ideas ever. Even trained police officers don't hit their target a 100% of the time . With our ridiculous carry laws anybody can have a gun and who knows if they know how to shoot.

Nayelli Concha
Self
Pflugerville, TX

We oppose this bill and we ask you to rethink the dangers if it. Guns at school do not make us safer. Research shows it actually increases the risk of violence.

We need background checks for every gun sale, red flag laws and raising the age for gun purchase to age 21.

If we care about children, parents and teachers, please listen to them.

Adrian Rodriguez
Self
Pflugerville, TX

I oppose this bill. Data and research indicates that proliferation of guns leads to increased probability of shootings. It is unfair to expect that teachers be burden with the responsibility to serve as armed guards.

Christopher Combs
Self
San Antonio, TX

This bill will not make our schools safer and in fact it seems extremely dangerous to arm teachers. We should be asking who is supporting this bill, why, and with what evidence were these policies developed. Were teachers consulted?

Susan L Johnson
self
KINGWOOD, TX

We must not arm teachers and support staff. We must keep our children safer. Being at risk for death at school is beyond unacceptable. support staff. I personally don't have a problem with public or district police armed in schools. But if the fulfillment of the "armed presence at every school" is filled by teachers or support staff - that is a very bad idea. I have talked to many teachers I know - they want to teach, not be armed guards. I have heard input from the police - if they come into a school in an emergency and there are people with guns without a uniform - they will waste time figuring out who to shoot and who to protect. Research has already shown that more guns in schools puts children at higher, not lower risk. Heck we already have district personnel leaving guns in bathrooms at schools. Please - no legislation that involves arming teachers and school staff. Thank you.

Patricia Sumrow
self
Frisco, TX

I am a parent with a child in the Texas school system. I worry every day about whether or not my child will come home from school, and I adamantly oppose this bill. This bill is a weak answer to the gun violence problem plaguing our country, and in particular, our schools. The hypothesis that an armed presence at schools will protect kids from gun violence has been tested and proven a failure, again and again. The reactive responses posed by this legislature to protect our children are weak and ineffective at best, and they have not done anything to stop the mass carnage of Texas schoolchildren. It's time to try a different approach.

We need a proactive action to PREVENT these senseless acts of violence, not implement more policies that only stop a shooting after multiple schoolchildren and faculty members have been murdered. We need gun safety legislation that includes background checks on all gun sales, red flag laws and safe storage legislation. To say any of these policies infringe on one's second amendment rights is a flat-out lie, and I'm fed up with hearing these falsehoods while watching parents bury their children because of our leaders' failure to act. You have failed, again and again, to prevent shootings in our Texas schools, and this bill will do nothing to change that. It is simply another weak attempt by this legislature to say they are addressing the problem while in fact doing nothing of substance to protect our children. Please do better. Parents across this state are begging you. Students are begging you. Teachers are begging you. Please represent the people of this state and do something effective, not whatever *this* is.

Mary Kuse
Self
Lakeway, TX

Yes, give every public school staff member a significant raise so they can continue serving our communities by receiving a living wage. Do NOT arm public school staff. Only well-trained, practiced, safety certified Law Enforcement Officers should possess and use weapons as the last resort in case of emergencies on school campuses. If the state cannot or will not provide Law Enforcement Officers to public school campuses, then the STATE MUST LIMIT THE ACCESS TO FIREARMS by people who are minors, felons, abusers, cognitively impaired, emotionally unstable who are a danger to themselves and others. STOP expecting Public Schools to solve the gun violence issue.

Christine Broughal
Texans for Special Education Reform
Cedar Park, TX

We at Texans for Special Education Reform would like to register our opposition to HB 3. In particular, we are opposed to Section 4 of the bill which would required an armed individual at every school in Texas. We believe this section, while well intentioned, would have devastating consequences for children attending Texas public schools and students with disabilities in particular.

Mark Anthony Vasquez
The Statewide Leadership Council
Weslaco, TX

My name is Mark Anthony Vasquez with the Statewide Leadership Council submitting my opposition to HB 3 and the implications inherent in such a legislative initiative.

I am a resident of Hidalgo County, Texas where we as in all parts of our state share the same concerns for school safety. The thought of a violent and tragic act being committed anywhere near our beloved children is as equally frightening as it is to any parent in Texas. When compared to the wide range of other sentiments and concerns which flood a parent's mind, school safety stands not alone, but in unison with one other shared concern that is often disregarded in the conversation regarding school safety - that is, the preventable measures and alternatives equally ignored in the process.

To anticipate there be a shift in results, when making use of the very same streams of conduct which has proven to fail in moments of tragedy and violence is akin to madness. Were tragedies being committed on our school campuses be the product of a re-evaluation of armed discipline then it would be fair to suggest a revamp or renewal to the construct applied and given the application of "School Safety" But, such is proven to not be the case. For, to think that police in schools were to be a solution to the central issue is a serious error in thought and one that would be counterproductive.

You see, when in the case of an ailment - as is the case with what has become the now series of horrible tragedies - one has to consider whether one is providing remedy to the ailment itself or the symptom. The fact that police officers are being assigned to school grounds is but a frail attempt to address the symptom. Medical science tells us that confronting the symptoms does nothing to alleviate the issue or the ailment itself. The fact that guns are readily available and that so in locations of relatively close proximity to the domestic security our elected officials seem to cherish is the ailment altogether. Unless we deal with the central issue that is the readily available weaponry accessible to the public, then the murder and the violence and the tragedies will continue to show up just the same as a cough or a runny nose would re-occur were the host to neglect providing remedy to the issue over the symptom. The symptoms will keep coming back again and again. Here in this metaphor - it is the gun laws and the availability of firearms that is the issue. Putting officers on our school campuses only provides a remedy to the symptom - when what is needed is a remedy to the problem itself.

I am against HB 3 because it fails to consider the issue as it stands, while deviating to a relic of our past that demands we the public embrace the now failed notion that police officers in school protect our children. Where are the investments in counseling programs and an expansion of mental health services, which would be a wiser use of state funded agencies.

Darcie Durham

Self

Houston, TX

I do not support guns in schools and as a public school parent I ABHOR the idea that you would withhold funding unless you arm someone on campus. The solution is better controls and focus on safety - the answer is NOT more guns!

Margaret Mendoza

Self

Austin, TX

We must control the number of guns available. That is the best way to avoid the ongoing tragedies occurring so often. Please vote for more gun control.

Margaret Mendoza

Self

Austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to this bill.

Olivia Green

self

New Braunfels, TX

My name is Olivia Green. I am a 7th grader at New Braunfels Middle School. I would not feel safe with guns in my school-- especially if my teachers had guns in the room. If the gun is left and seized by a student, it could easily lead to a tragic accident in our schools. I don't think it's fair that students like me need to fear for their safety every day in their classrooms. People my age already have plenty of struggles going on and adding gun violence is just putting it over the line. Already, it is hard to go to school, with all of the crazy issues we have-- imagine constantly being in fear for your life on top of that. I don't think we should risk the future generations for arms. It shouldn't be a question if you choose a weapon or a child's life. It isn't worth the risk.

Heather Roell

self, freelancer

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. Studies show guns on campuses make students less safe, not the opposite of this. Plus, there's no mention of funding to make this happen. It's fiscally irresponsible for already struggling schools.

Giffords Law Center identified over 100 incidents of adults mishandling firearms in school settings from 2014 to 2021, 8 of which were in Texas. And that's just those publicly reported, which doesn't include recent incidents, like the Texas superintendent who left his gun in a bathroom stall in January, where it was found by a third-grader and then corroborated by a second third grader.

That superintendent wasn't the first school employee to recklessly handle his gun in a school. In 2019, a high-school vice principal armed under the guardian program in Whitney, Texas left her gun in a restroom. Just two months later, a middle school teacher armed as a "guardian" in the same school district left her gun unattended in a teacher's workroom. Clearly these "guardians" are receiving woefully inadequate training.

Even trained officers are sometimes careless, like the school resource officer in Ingram who left a firearm unattended in a bathroom, where it was found by a student. Or the Mesquite Police Officer who unintentionally fired his gun inside the local high school.

Guns in schools is a bad idea.

Floyd Trefny
BAMDA
Houston, TX

I live in Harris County and my representatives serve on this committee. I am adamantly opposed to HB 3 as arming our teachers and school staff is going to get a responding teacher killed when the real police show up and think the person with the gun is the shooter. Nashville today is a good case in point as the shooter was in her twenties and could have been easily mistaken as a teacher with a gun. This is very important to me and I expect this committee to not approve this bill. THANKS.

Elva Mendoza
Self; Public Health Social Worker
Austin, TX

While there may be benefits to some provisions of HB3, I absolutely oppose forcing guns into Texas schools. It would make teachers and students less safe, not more. It's ineffective, dangerous, places more burden on our already stressed teachers, and ignores evidence-based, widely supported policies.

There is no evidence the presence of a gun prevents school shootings or even minimizes casualties during one. Mass shootings have happened on numerous campuses with an armed presence (Santa Fe, Parkland, etc.) and over 300 trained, armed officers failed to intervene in Uvalde for over an hour because they were outgunned by a single, inexperienced teenager with an assault-style rifle.

Aside from being ineffective deterrents, guns in schools pose significant risks. Giffords Law Center compiled a list of guns mishandled on school campuses; it's full of instances of teachers, staff, and even officers leaving guns unattended on school buses, in bathrooms, in class rooms, etc. where they have been found and handled by children. Several of the Texas incidents involved so-called "guardians." Thankfully, so far, children have only sustained minor injuries when these carelessly handled firearms have been discharged. But HB3's forced gun provision may very well end in tragedy.

This underfunded mandate would force many schools to resort to arming teachers. School districts already have the option to arm teachers through the "guardian" or "school marshal" programs. The vast majority have rejected the notion of arming teachers. Why is local control being usurped to push an ineffective, dangerous policy?

Most teachers don't want to be armed. They want more professionals to prevent struggling students from becoming mass shooters. National professional associations recommend one social worker for every 250 students. Texas' ratio is 1:5,194.

Teachers want a manageable workload. According to a task force convened by the Governor, unsustainable workloads were the biggest problem cited by those who recently left the profession. In one teacher's words, "each year districts add more and more to the plates of teachers and with minimal pay increase." And now we want them to be sharp shooters and SWAT members too?

It's incredible that HB3 would mandate guns on campus when they put students at risk, and the horrible reality has shown us they don't prevent school shootings or even limit casualties. Why waste energy on a failed policy when studies show there are policies that ACTUALLY work?

Red flags were ignored before the Parkland shooting. Improper gun storage facilitated the Santa Fe shooting. An anachronistic age limit allowed the Uvalde shooter to legally purchase his murder weapons. Those failures have evidence-based solutions supported by the majority of Texans. Enact an extreme risk protection order. Pass a stricter gun storage law. Raise the minimum age to purchase what are essentially weapons of war. Don't keep throwing more guns at the problem. PREVENT IT.