

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 4165

Compiled on: Monday, April 24, 2023 8:35 PM

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Hearing Date: April 24, 2023 1:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Mitzi Higginbotham

Self

Reklaw Texas, TX

I strongly oppose HB 4165 in its current form. A pocket knife is a TOOL that most men and women carry either in their pockets or their purses. WE LIVE IN TEXAS! It is not a weapon and should never be a criminal offense for having a knife in a vehicle, or having possession of a knife on school property.

On the other hand brass knuckles are made solely to cause bodily harm or death. In my 50 years of education I have never known any adult (parent/guardian/visitor) to bring brass knuckles to inflict harm on any school employees our student! I can't believe this is something that needs to be addressed in the house.

This bill is an example of governmental overreach. This bill is vaguely written and broad. It makes me questions it values and it doesn't make feel safer on school property.

Once again I oppose HB 4165.

Respectfully,

Mitzi Higginbotham

Rachel Hale

TX Freedom Coalition & Myself

Henderson, TX

OPPOSE this bill please! What if a parent volunteer leaves a work knife in their vehicle, a parent has a knife and comes to drop off food, or a teacher in shop glass is using a knife to cut something?? Anyone in Admin that has an axe to grind with a parent or employee would not hesitate to use this law to turn them in and make them a criminal. Please OPPOSE

Carrie Baker, Mrs

Self

Lubbock, TX

This bill sets a dangerous precedent and cannot pass. Please stop it from getting any further. Trash this bill!
Thank you.

Carolyn Lux
Self/Retired RN
Fredericksburg, TX

I am opposed to this bill. It will lead to unintended consequences and criminalize unsuspecting people who as a habit, carry a leather man, box cutter, etc, as part of their work equipment. Please vote no on this bill.

Paula Hilliard, Mrs.
Texas Education 911 and self
San Antoni, TX

Many Texas parents carry a work knives in their vehicles. Most carry them for convenience. Others, carry first aid and road-emergency gear that includes a blade. This would criminalize that, if a parent drove the vehicle to school for a concert, or to pick up their children. The certain targets of a bill like this, were it to become law, would be to go after a "problem parent" known to perform a job that requires a blade, and use district police to search the car.

What better way to silence a parent for speaking at board meetings than to go after them on weapons charges?

Under this bill:

A teacher cannot use an exacto knife on a class project.

A custodian cannot use a blade to repair things or cut tape.

The office manager can't open the box of copy paper.

The military officer and Boy Scouts dads can't drive on campus without first going home to drop off the pocket knife.

The cafeteria workers can't slice the bread.

Parents believe to prohibit a parent or staff member from having any sort of knife on district property is government overreach and does not reflect Texas values, heritage and tradition. We are very concerned of how this would be weaponized against parents.

Wesley Scott Lewis

Self (commercial real estate agent/writer)

Austin, TX

Dear Members of the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety:

I respect Rep. Frazier's experience in law enforcement, and I'm sure his heart is in the right place; however, HB 4165 is so inconsistent with existing Texas weapon laws and with the very nature of the Lone Star State that I'm honestly surprised it was filed. As this bill is currently written, it would not only make criminals out of art students, biology students, home-economics students, and cafeteria staff; it would literally criminalize possession of a Swiss Army knife in places where it's legal to possess a handgun.

The current version of this bill uses such a broad definition of "knife" that it would include a pair of scissors or an X-Acto knife used in an art class. And there are so few defenses to prosecution (the only defense is for a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity) that a student learning to prepare a steak or dissect a frog could be prosecuted, as could a member of the cafeteria staff who uses a knife to chop vegetables.

Even if those issues are addressed via committee substitute or amendment, the criminalization of possession of a knife in places (i.e., the grounds of a school) where state law does not criminalize possession of a firearm (state law only criminalizes possession of a firearm in a school building) is patently absurd. Schools already maintain zero tolerance for any student caught with a knife on campus, so what problem does this bill seek to solve?

Many Texans carry a pocketknife in the same way they carry a cell phone and a credit card—it's just one more thing they may need throughout their day. Most don't think of these knives as weapons (pretty much everyone in Texas is allowed to have pretty much any gun in pretty much any location, at pretty much any time, so that old adage about bringing a knife to a gunfight precludes arming oneself with a Benchmade).

The idea that a teacher could get a year in county jail for having a pen knife on his key chain or that a parent could get a year in jail for having a Swiss Army knife at a basketball game or school play is ludicrous. Of course, we all know that those probably aren't the people who'll be targeted. Instead, it'll be the 22-year-old Black kid picking up his little brother from school who'll attract the attention and ire of the school resource officer and have his life ruined because the Texas Legislature decided that our state didn't have enough reasons to throw people in jail.

Texas has real problems with real weapons (e.g., we're currently not sure—<https://tinyurl.com/4r4wd5k2>—whether a high school can tell an 18-year-old student with a license to carry that he can't keep a handgun in his car parked in the school parking lot). Please don't put us in a place where the police are called to decide whether some young woman's nail file merits her being marched out of school in handcuffs and carted off to jail.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

W. Scott Lewis

Linda Martin

Self

San Angelo, TX

Please vote AGAINST this! If someone who is perceived to have gone against the administration, has work knife in their possession or in their vehicle, it could be used against them to silence their voices!

Anna Bartosh

self, retired teacher

San Angelo, TX

Please oppose this bill.

Noe Perez
Self; Teacher
Laguna Vista, TX

My name is Noe E. Perez, and I represent myself. I oppose H.B. 4165. In a nutshell, this bill is a solution in search of a problem.

Chapter 37, Education Code already gives public schools plenary powers to deal with conduct involving the possession of knives by the students within the school system. Chapter 46, Penal Code adequately covers conduct regarding location-restricted knives. H.B. 4165 is so broad that it would actually place cafeteria workers, food science teachers, welding teachers, automotive class teachers, custodians, maintenance workers, parents, and vendors associated with A/C repair and plumbing repair work in jeopardy of going to jail for one year (even if they possess a knife in their privately owned or leased vehicle).

If enacted, H.B. 4165 would be bad policy because the bill goes against the ongoing trends of common sense criminal jurisprudence. As a teacher with more than three decades of experience, I respectfully request that this committee completely table H.B. 4165.

Kris Kittle
Self
Fort Worth, TX

OPPOSE this bill. It is not knives (which are needed in cooking classes), knuckles or switchblades are the problem in education. The problem is JUSTIFICATION of POOR BEHAVIOR. Oppose this bill.

Melissa Beckett
Self
Longview, TX

AGAINST - Feared Consequences: Work knife in truck of dad volunteer? Teacher working on class project cutting foam board? If either has gone against administration, expect misdemeanor charges. Will lead to further silencing of dissent.

Alan Higginbotham
Self
Reklaw, TX

I urge you to vote against this bill. . Brass knuckles have only one use. If you want to regulate them fine but many if not a majority of men carry a pocket knife, and many of them are assisted opening which means you can open it with one hand easily. A pocket knife is a very useful tool and you should be allowed anywhere. This is ridiculous government wanting to control everything

Robert Hayhurst
Self
Canyon, TX

This bill is unnecessary because this is a local issue -- the code of conduct of most schools already covers this. Also, the bill is poorly worded (or purposefully worded) to criminalize anyone who carries even a small pen knife, a parent who picks up their child in their work truck which happens to have a knife in it, a teacher using a knife to work on a project, etc.

Amy Huggins

self

Houston, TX

I OPPOSE this bill because it could be used to silence dissent and I believe that free speech is absolutely vital. I do support safety in schools, but that safety must be balanced with preserving our rights to free speech and this bill is too broad.

I OPPOSE this bill. Please vote NO

Thank you