



INDIVIDUALLY WE POWER CHANGE.
TOGETHER WE POWER A MOVEMENT.

An Open Call to the Texas Legislature on Gun Violence and Family Violence

To the Honorable Senators and Representatives in the Texas Legislature,

Many of us watched the tragic news in Austin recently and wondered: How could a parent murder two children, one his own daughter, and the mother of his children in front of his young son? At the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), we also wonder but know it far too common in our state for a victim of family violence to lose their life to gun violence at the hands of their intimate partner.

Alicia, Sheila, Shanti, Lynda, Josephine, Rona, Kimberly, Kristy, Kiva, and Melina. We ask you to hold these names and those of ***the other 85 Texans*** who lost their lives in 2019, at the hands of their intimate partner by a firearm, as you read our plea today.

Ranley (1 year old) and *Dafne* (5 years old), whose lives were stolen from them when they, along with their mothers, were shot and killed ***again due to family violence***. Hold their names as well. *Christopher*, a law enforcement officer who was shot and killed in the line of duty while protecting a victim of family violence from an abusive partner with firearm.

And, as you hold those names, we want to speak plainly as a domestic violence coalition who so often has seen this body openly support and take up calls to action in support of victims of family violence- ***we need your help***. Victims need your help. Law Enforcement officers need your help.

We want to also be clear; we are not writing today on the issue of gun ownership. ***We come to you today on the deadly intersection of firearms and family violence***. We come to you today because we feel compelled to share the urgency - and terror - we hold in our hearts every day for victims of family violence in our state. Consider these facts:

- **863-** Texans lost their lives at the hands of an intimate partner using a firearm in just 10 years.
- **500%-** The rate at which the risk of homicide increases for women when an abusive partner has access to a firearm.
- **22-** perpetrators who were either currently or previously prohibited from possessing firearms due to their criminal background in 2019 alone who killed their intimate partners.

Our call to action for you is not on one bill, as many are before you this session that speak to this intersection. Our ask is simple; for each bill before you related to firearms access or possession, ***consider the impact on the safety and lives of victims of family violence***. Consider their families and the law enforcement officers that strive to protect their communities. Consider if a Texan may lose their life because of this decision. Consider if the passage of the bill will allow a violent offender, an abusive partner, easier access to a firearm. ***Consider if you can hold the weight of that preventable loss of life with us.***

With this consideration, you will be standing with the over 70,000 victims who seek services at a family violence program every year in our state because home is not safe. You will be doing this for the nearly 80,000 Law Enforcement officers who put their lives on the line to support victims and respond to these all too often lethal calls.

Thank you for holding this with us. Your ongoing, steadfast support to victims of family violence is needed now more than ever. Please, help us create a safer Texas with responsible gun ownership laws that place vulnerable Texans and our sworn officers at the center of your decision-making.

**Gloria Aguilera Terry, Texas Council on Family Violence
Statewide**

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The undersigned Family Violence Programs of Texas

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Seguin, TX*

*Emilee Whitehurst, Houston Area Women's Center
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