



Texas Council on Family Violence Statement on Firearm Carry Act of 2021

AUSTIN, TX (Sept. 1, 2021) – Today, the [Texas Council on Family Violence](#), alongside domestic violence agencies, survivors and public health and safety partners across our State, are filled with apprehension as the “Firearm Carry Act of 2021” goes into effect.

Domestic violence and firearms are a *proven* lethal mix, and the statistics are heartbreaking.

- *The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by as much as 500%.*
- *Safety risks increased for survivors within the first year of the pandemic, compared to the prior year, resulting in a 10% increase in victims contacting law enforcement, and a 60% increase in firearms present at the scene when law enforcement arrived.*
- *Over the past 10 years, the number of women murdered by an intimate partner with a firearm in Texas has nearly doubled.*

Texas lawmakers codified restrictions over two decades ago prohibiting convicted domestic violence perpetrators, as well as respondents of protective orders, from possessing firearms for a duration of time to protect both victims and public safety. Though these laws have long been on the books, domestic violence murders by firearms continue to increase at an alarming rate.

Even though Texas law requires courts to admonish defendants and those subject to a protective order that they cannot possess a firearm, courts often do not take the next crucial step – ensuring the identification and transfer of firearms that defendants possess. ***In fact, less than ten of our state’s 254 counties have a program in place to enforce the transfer of firearms from convicted abusers in accordance with the law.*** That means a defendant can be convicted by a state court for committing a domestic violence offense and walk away still having access to guns – oftentimes with no steps taken to enforce firearm prohibitions intended to prevent future violence.

Texas Council on Family Violence supports lawful, responsible firearm ownership as a basic right. We are *not* advocating for additional restrictions to firearm access; we are ardently advocating for our state and courts to implement the existing laws meant to protect victims of family violence from firearms-related fatalities. Without these laws being ***upheld*** or ***enforced*** by our courts and our counties, Texas is at best offering a false promise to domestic violence victims and at worst completely abandoning protection of them.

Creating a safer Texas has always been The Council’s mission. We are educating Texas judges, prosecutors, law enforcement and other elected officials on the imperative need to enforce

existing prohibitions, making sure violent offenders who are legally prohibited from possessing firearms do not have access to them.

We encourage Texas residents to stand with us against domestic violence and irresponsible weapon ownership by contacting their state legislators and local representatives and asking them to implement firearm transfer protocols. As we enter the new reality of permitless carry, let's think of our own children, parents, siblings and friends and take action for the health and safety of our families and communities.

-Texas Council on Family Violence