

Submitter: Jessica Fox
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB551

I am a responsible gun owner in favor SB 551.

SB 551 would require school districts to provide information on their website and social media accounts pertaining to the importance of secure storage of medications and firearms, including:

- (1) the risk of substance abuse;
- (2) symptoms of an overdose and how to respond to an overdose; and
- (3) methods for ensuring secure storage of prescription drugs, over the counter medications, and firearms/ammunition.

This bill merely addresses guidelines that school districts would be required to disburse regarding the aforementioned issues above, but the second amendment controversy that it creates is clear in prior testimony submissions.

As a third-year law student, I am more than familiar with the rights that the United States Constitution extends to American citizens. Additionally, I have been trained to interpret statutes, and analyze the process in which courts interpret and apply legislation. With that being said, our second amendment right to bear arms is not attacked by this bill.

SB 551 would not mandate gun lockups, ask schools to obtain information from students regarding private firearm usage, nor prohibit access to firearms for persons under 18 (i.e. children who hunt recreationally). Instead, this bill would simply mandate the disbursement of information regarding how to safely store the aforementioned objects in their home. It is a preventative measure.

In an ideal world, everyone who owns a firearm would be a responsible gun owner with common sense. However, we can all agree that we do not live in that ideal world. While many responsible gun owners take it upon themselves to safely store their firearms, keep track of their firearms, and teach their children about the benefits and detriments of firearms; others were never taught to do this.

I believe that SB 551 supports our right to bear arms by attempting to educate gun-owners on proper storage practices. Continuing to educate our communities on the safeguards that should be put in place to prevent children from obtaining firearms could diminish the violent incidents in our country that instigate conversations regarding potential limitations of the second amendment. Why wouldn't we support a measure that intends to provide our communities with education regarding safely

storing firearms? This is the same education that many gun owners were lucky enough to informally receive from our parents, grandparents, or other close relatives.

I fully support the second amendment, and an American citizen's right to bear arms. However, as a responsible gun owner, I believe we have a duty to attempt to prevent the children in our community from obtaining a firearm and accidentally harming themselves or others.

We all have the right to our viewpoints – but the concept of “give and take” is embodied in the democratic nature of our country. We must give a little to take a little. If that means allowing school districts to educate their communities on proper gun storage in an attempt to decrease gun violence in our state, then I am all for it.

Jessica Fox