

Submitter: Seth Kezar

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB947

As a federal law enforcement officer with over two decades of service in protecting the constitutional rights and public safety of all Americans, I submit this testimony in opposition to the proposed bill that seeks to eliminate statutory references to the term “militia” and replace them solely with “National Guard.”

This proposed change may appear, at first glance, to be a matter of semantic modernization. However, the implications are deeper and far-reaching. The term “militia” has a longstanding and deliberate place in our legal and constitutional framework, notably in the Second Amendment and in federal statutes such as Title 10 of the U.S. Code. Historically and legally, “militia” refers not only to the organized forces such as the National Guard, but also to the broader body of able-bodied citizens who may be called upon in times of national or local emergency.

By striking the term “militia” and replacing it exclusively with “National Guard,” the bill risks narrowing the interpretation of the people’s constitutional relationship to the government and the defense of the republic. It effectively equates the militia only with state-controlled, federally regulated forces, which are already governed under different authorities. This could create confusion, limit traditional state sovereignty, and potentially undermine the intent of citizen participation in defense and emergency response frameworks.

From a law enforcement perspective, clarity in statutory language is crucial. Replacing “militia” across the board may inadvertently create legal ambiguity regarding jurisdiction, authority, and the eligibility of individuals or groups to participate in state or local security functions. Moreover, this shift may provoke concerns among the public that the government is attempting to rewrite or reinterpret constitutional principles through subtle legislative changes.

In summary, while modernization of legal language is often necessary, this specific change risks undermining constitutional clarity and public trust. I urge lawmakers to consider the broader legal, historical, and operational consequences before enacting such a revision.