



## **Proposed Legislative Rider – Article V/Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Calling for a *Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign***

### **The Need:**

In March 2016, the Texas Department of State Health Services Child Fatality Review Team acknowledged firearm accidents and suicides as a public health problem and made a recommendation to the Governor and the Texas Legislature for a proactive smart solution **via the creation of a Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign**. Yet presently Texas has **no statewide campaign around the issue of safe gun storage**.

### **The Comparison:**

In its wisdom, the Texas Legislature has long recognized the need for outreach on a variety of public safety education programs, i.e. *Click It or Ticket*; *Turn Around, Don't Drown*; *Sober and Safe*; *Share the Road*; and numerous others. In fact, motor vehicle accidents account for 3,900 deaths annually, and Texas spends approximately \$8.4 million/biennium (DPS budget) and \$121 million/biennium (Texas Department of Transportation budget) on 13 different safety education campaigns around the issue of safe driving. These programs/campaigns save lives and save taxpayer dollars.

Firearm deaths have risen every year since 2011, and took 3,200 Texas lives in 2015. Still, the State dedicates little to no resources to education and awareness around the issue of safe gun storage.

### **The Numbers – A Few Highlights:**

- Improper firearm storage aids criminals. In 2012, the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives reported the number of firearms stolen or lost in Texas reached 18, 874. These firearms oftentimes end up in criminals' hands, but many thefts could be prevented if Texans stores their guns properly.
- An estimated 199,670 Texas children live in homes with loaded, unlocked firearms.
- In 2014, 567 children were killed or injured by firearms. In Harris County alone, firearms are the second leading cause of accidental deaths for children.
- In 2015, 1,994 firearm suicides were reported.
- The Department of State Health Services reports \$232 million in hospital charges for firearm injuries in 2014 alone (*latest data available*).

### **The Solution:**

The Texas Legislature should appropriate funding from the DPS budget, or set aside a small amount from each application for a License to Carry, or a combination of both, for a **Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign** (*see attached for proposed rider language*). This solution would not infringe on gun owner rights, yet would encourage responsibility, save lives, and reduce crime.

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Calling for a *Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign***

Rider Number: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

**Article V. DPS Appropriations Rider – Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign**

**Statewide Safe Gun Storage Campaign.** Out of existing funds appropriated to the Texas Department of Public Safety, or from a set-aside amount of \$5.00 from each application fee collected pursuant to Government Code 411.174 and 411.185, excluding voluntary contributions dedicated to veterans' assistance, or a combination thereof, the Department of Public Safety shall create and promote a statewide safe gun storage campaign. In creating the campaign the Department of Public Safety shall collaborate with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Department of State Health Services, Department of Family and Protective Services, other legislative leaders and state agencies, and interested stakeholders. The public awareness campaign shall begin in 2018. The public awareness campaign may include online materials, printed materials, public service announcements, or other advertising media.