



**TESTIMONY**  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**  
**HOMELAND SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**HB 3340**  
**Tuesday, April 25, 2017**

I am Aimee Mobley Turney testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas IN SUPPORT OF HB 3340. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to share the League of Women Voters of Texas' position on this bill.

We support HB 3340. Our position on gun safety, like other League positions, is derived through a lengthy and thoughtful process involving the participation of 25 local Leagues representing more than 5,000 members and supporters throughout the state of Texas.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports this proposed legislation that provides an extra layer of suicide prevention by

- Including a message from the Department of Public Safety about the importance of securing access to firearms when a family member is at high risk of harming themselves or others in the License to Carry training curriculum and including the 1-800 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in the LTC training.
- Directing the Health and Human Services Commission and Department of Public Safety to include information on safe storage of firearms and the 1-800 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number on their websites, with emphasis on pages related to veterans and teens.
- Authorizing DPS and/or HHSC to utilize other organizations' resources to provide suicide prevention information and the 1-800 suicide prevention number to licensed firearm dealers, shooting ranges, and gun shows.

Texas' State Department of Health Services has shown that death by firearm was the leading cause of suicide in both Texas and the United States in 2014.<sup>i</sup> Though guns are not the most common method by which people attempt suicide, they are the most lethal. About 85 percent of suicide attempts with a firearm end in death.<sup>ii</sup>

Last year the NRA and the Second Amendment Foundation collaborated with suicide prevention groups to pass similar legislation in Washington state.<sup>iii</sup>

The nation's largest suicide prevention organization, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the firearms industry trade association, National Shooting Sports Foundation joined forces in January to launch a new education program to potentially save thousands of lives. The relationship with volunteers and local shooting range owners, firearms retail stores and gun show vendors shared resources on recognizing the risks and warning signs of suicide and ways of reaching out to those who may be struggling is similar to measures in HB 3340.<sup>iv</sup>

Suicide prevention should never be censored. HB 3340 is an effective measure for saving lives and protecting the public.

**For additional information, please contact: Aimee Mobley Turney, Gun Safety Issue Chair, [president@lwvhouston.org](mailto:president@lwvhouston.org), 713.784.2923**

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.

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<sup>i</sup> Texas Department of Health 2014 Suicide Data Briefs

<sup>ii</sup> Drexler, Madeline. "Guns and suicide: The hidden toll" *Harvard School of Public Health News*, Spring 2013

<sup>iii</sup> Kramer, Becky. "NRA, Prevention Groups Team up on Bill to Tackle Suicide." *The Washington Times*. Associated Press, 13 Mar. 2016. Web. 24 Apr. 2017.

<sup>iv</sup> AFSP. "Nation's Largest Suicide Prevention Organization and the Firearms Industry Trade Association Join Forces, Launch New Education Program to Potentially Save Thousands of Lives — AFSP." *AFSP*. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 17 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Apr. 2017.