



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS HOMELAND SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE Tuesday, April 4, 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 631**. 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 631. 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 with its innovative steps of:

- Developing and implementing a public awareness campaign designed to encourage firearm safety and to improve public awareness on the topics of
 - a. prevention of firearm accidents involving children
 - b. suicide prevention
 - c. and the safe handling and storage of firearms.and
- Allowing the public to make voluntary contributions toward a safe storage campaign.

According to the Harris County Institute of Forensic Science statistics, guns are the second leading cause of accidental death for children in Harris County. Of the 1,074 minors who died in Harris County from 2011 to 2014, about 1 in 8 was killed by a gun, according to the data.ⁱ

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. The rate of firearm suicide was 6.75 per 100,000 in Texas vs. 6.37 per 100,000 in the United States.ⁱⁱ 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.ⁱⁱⁱ

HB 631 is an effective measure for saving lives and protecting the general public.

For additional information, please contact: Aimee Mobley Turney, Gun Safety Issue Chair, 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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ⁱ George, C. (2016, January 22). Guns now No. 2 cause of accidental child death in county *Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.chron.com>

ⁱⁱ Texas Department of Health 2014 Suicide Data Briefs

ⁱⁱⁱ Drexler, Madeline. "Guns and suicide: The hidden toll" *Harvard School of Public Health News*, Spring 2013