



HOMELAND SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021, 10:30 AM

AIMEE MOBLEY TURNEY, Issue Chair for Gun Safety

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

Delivered in person by Issue Chair

I am AIMEE MOBLEY TURNEY, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas FOR HB 118. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for allowing us to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill.

The League of Women Voters of Texas **SUPPORTS HB 118**, which requires background checks of all private gun sales or transfers before the sale or transfer by a licensed firearms dealer, in the manner required by 18 U.S.C. Section 922, a national instant criminal background check to verify that the person to whom the firearm is being sold or transferred may lawfully possess a firearm. Narrow exceptions are included for those who are otherwise licensed to carry a firearm or in certain reasonable circumstances, and no additional regulation is imposed on licensed firearms dealers.

Two studies led by Daniel Webster at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health demonstrated the impact of state laws requiring a permit—and background check—before an individual can purchase a handgun. When Connecticut implemented this requirement, gun-related homicides in the state fell 40 percent; when Missouri eliminated this requirement, gun homicides increased 26 percent.¹

Universal background checks may also reduce illegal gun trafficking. For instance, when analyzing crime guns a study in the *Journal of Urban Health* found that fewer of the out-of-state guns originated in states with universal background checks than in states with no background checks for private sales of firearms².

Requiring background checks of all gun sales and transfers will not cause gun crimes and violence to cease. However, if the implementation and enforcement of such a policy is successful in stemming the flow of new firearms to criminal markets, universal background check laws could reduce gun crime by increasing the price of firearms in the secondary markets on which criminals mostly rely.³

¹ Daniel Webster, Cassandra Kercher Crifasi, and Jon S. Vernick, "Effects of the Repeal of Missouri's Handgun Purchaser Licensing Law on Homicides," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 91 (3) (2014): 293–302; Daniel Webster, Cassandra Kercher Crifasi, and Jon S. Vernick, "Erratum to: Effects of the Repeal of Missouri's Handgun Purchaser Licensing Law on Homicides," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 91 (3) (2014): 598–601

² Webster, Daniel W., Jon S. Vernick, and Maria T. Bulzacchelli, "Effects of State-Level Firearm Seller Accountability Policies on Firearm Trafficking," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 86, No. 4, 2009, pp. 525–537

³ Cook, Philip J., Stephanie Molliconi, and Thomas B. Cole, "Regulating Gun Markets," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 86, No. 1, 1995, pp. 59–92.

HB 118 is an effective measure for saving lives and protecting the general public. We urge you to **SUPPORT** this bill.

For additional information, please contact Aimee MobleyTurney, Gun Safety Issue Chair, aimeeturney@lwvhouston.org, or 832-848-0234.

The League of Women Voters is one of America's oldest and most trusted civic nonprofit organizations. Formed in 1919, the League of Women Voters of Texas represents over 13,000 grassroots advocates and 34 local Leagues across the State of Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seek to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to people 16 and older of all gender identities.