



House Select Committee on Community Safety
House Bill 853 by Rep. Barbara Gervin-Hawkins
Testimony by Tilden Childs III, MD
Texas Medical Association and Texas Pediatric Society
April 4, 2023

Honorable Chair Guillen, Vice Chair Johnson, and esteemed members of the committee, my name is Dr. Tilden Childs, and I'm a radiologist from Fort Worth, representing the Texas Medical Association and Texas Pediatric Society today in support of House Bill 853. We believe HB 853 addresses the importance of improving public awareness of firearm safety, and encourages community efforts to prevent firearm violence.

In 2020, firearm-related injuries became the leading cause of death in children and adolescents, age 1 to 19, surpassing motor vehicle crashes.¹ We know most parents with firearms in the home talk to their children about firearm safety, but not all do – which increases risk in the home. Safe firearm storage and public awareness of effective common-sense measures, such as proper storage to reduce firearm violence, could potentially save lives.

Also, keeping firearms away from people who present a risk of harm provides a strong base for managing firearm safety. We believe Representative Gervin-Hawkins' proposal to designate August as Gun Violence Awareness Month will improve ongoing public dialogue to better prevent firearm-related injuries and deaths.

TMA and TPS members remain focused on proven prevention and harm-reduction methods in all areas of public health. We encourage you to approve House Bill 853, and we offer our assistance with implementation of this important legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I am happy to take any questions.

¹ "Current Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents in the United States." 2022.
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmc2201761>