

State must act now to prevent next mass shooting in Texas

texasbcm.substack.com/p/state-must-act-now-to-prevent-next

Texas' Big City Mayors, a bipartisan coalition of mayors from our state's most populous cities, are calling upon our state leadership to take immediate action to prevent the next mass shooting in Texas.

We represent a continuum of political ideology and have come together because we know most Texans have a strong desire for common sense reform to protect our children. **As mayors, we believe the legislature and executive leaders can come together to find the right solutions for Texas.**



We are specifically calling upon Governor Abbott to call a Special Session and add the following to the call:

- **Require universal background checks for gun purchases.**
- **Increase the age to purchase assault weapons in Texas to 21.**
- **Pass Red Flag laws to identify threats before shootings.**
- **Significant increase in mental health support funding.**
- **Train and properly resource school safety officers**

These reforms, supported by most Texans, would have prevented the shooters in El Paso and Uvalde from obtaining their weapons.

All our communities have supported our local law enforcement during these difficult times of civil unrest and pandemic-related violence. Pursuing gun policies that ease access to firearms makes the jobs of our first responders even more difficult.

Families are asking us how many more shootings must happen before we act. The communities of Uvalde, El Paso, Santa Fe, and Sutherland Springs deserve better. In response to mass shootings—Florida passed red flag laws, and **we can do the same here in Texas.**

In the immediacy after the shooting, state leaders specifically spoke about mental health disparities. We agree with the need to address this long-neglected area. **Texas is ranked 50th in the nation for mental health care access by *Mental Health America*.** We should do all we can to lift our state up from the bottom of this list.

There have been welcome and strategic proposals presented by other state leaders regarding mental health programs, specifically for students in school. We agree that significant investments in behavioral health, **several magnitudes greater than what has been mentioned**, are both needed and urgent.

Addressing gaps in mental health care access would require the state legislature to massively expand existing programs. This would mean more funding for school counselors, social workers, and support staff for public schools as well as enhancing accessibility at our mental health authorities. The lack of statewide access for mental health services has caused our first responders, especially our police, to all too often to be the only response to a person in crisis.

We can better support our first responders by funding mental health programs that allow for patient access and care instead of leaving law enforcement to handle these complex situations.

The problem that we face as a state, and that local law enforcement faces every day, is the ease with which dangerous individuals can obtain and access these weapons.

Protecting the 2nd Amendment means passing responsible policies that a wide majority of law-abiding gun owners support.

We cannot stand idly by while more of our fellow Texans, often our children and law enforcement officers, are laid to rest as the result of another preventable shooting.

Action is the only thing that will save more lives.



MAYOR GINGER NELSON
AMARILLO



MAYOR JIM ROSS
ARLINGTON



MAYOR STEVE ADLER
AUSTIN



MAYOR PAULETTE GUAJARDO
CORPUS CHRISTI



MAYOR ERIC JOHNSON
DALLAS



MAYOR OSCAR LEESER
EL PASO



MAYOR MATTIE PARKER
FORT WORTH



MAYOR RON JENSEN
GRAND PRAIRIE



MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER
HOUSTON



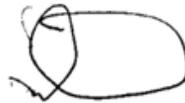
MAYOR PETE SAENZ
LAREDO



MAYOR JOHN MUNS
PLANO



MAYOR RON NIRENBERG
SAN ANTONIO



MAYOR JOE ZIMMERMAN
SUGAR LAND