



Legislative Presence Talking Points 2024 Legislative Session

Who We Are: Voices for a Safer Tennessee (Safer TN) is a nonpartisan, grassroots coalition of Tennessee parents and grandparents, business executives and educators, faith leaders and healthcare professionals, hunters and military families, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and concerned citizens from all walks of life. Our mission is to build safer, healthier communities by reducing preventable firearm tragedies across Tennessee.

- 25,000 coalition members across all 95 counties and growing.
- Founded by, led by, and funded by Tennesseans, committed to Tennessee solutions.

What We Support: Together, we can create a safer Tennessee by advocating for:

- **Consistent background check requirements** across more firearm transactions to help keep firearms away from dangerous people who are not legally allowed to own them.
- **Temporary transfer laws** that would allow authorities to petition the court to temporarily restrict access to firearms from people who pose a risk danger to themselves or others.
- **Stronger firearm storage laws** that require firearm owners to provide secure storage and report lost or stolen weapons.

We're excited to get back to work in 2024:

- Voices for a Safer Tennessee recognizes that there is a lot of work to be done to improve safety in Tennessee and that change does not happen overnight. We are committed to working towards incremental change in the short term, while continuing to advocate for our three main policy priorities: 1. Expanded background checks, 2. Temporary transfer laws and 3. Secure storage.
- If enacted, data shows that our three pragmatic, evidence-based priorities will reduce firearm injury and death, while preserving Second Amendment rights.
- We appreciate the first steps the legislature took during the 2023 Special Session, and we look forward to continuing the conversation this session.
- We are particularly encouraged by plans for a \$1.1 million PSA campaign on secure storage, which was included in a bill passed during special session. We would like to see the campaign paired with data tracking to understand its impact on stolen guns, suicides, and accidental shootings.



- This session, we also hope to see incremental policy changes that strengthen our background check system to reduce the 761,000+ record backlog, address prohibited purchaser record gaps, and prohibit those deemed incompetent to stand trial from accessing firearms.
- Tennessee offers lots to be proud of, but unfortunately firearm safety is not among them. Our state is #1 in the nation for guns stolen from cars, #3 in the nation for unintentional shootings by children, and in the top 10 states with the highest rates of firearm violence. Firearms are the #1 cause of death for Tennessee children.
- Multiple polls affirm that a majority of Tennessee voters - including Republicans and gun owners – support our three policy priorities.
- Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint, and Safer TN is committed to advocating for firearm safety for years to come.

If legislators or their staff have questions about specific policies, please recommend they contact one of Safer TN's lobbyists: Luke Ashley, Brian Bivens or Michael Bivens, or Safer TN policy director Erin Rogus (erin@safertn.org).

Background on August 2023 Special Session:

The laws legislators passed during the Special Session are a first step toward creating a safer Tennessee, and we look forward to continuing this work with them.

During Special Session, the TN General Assembly enacted:

- \$1.1 million PSA campaign on secure storage
- Made gun safes and firearm safety devices tax free
- Requires Dept. of Safety to provide free gun locks to TN residents upon request
- Requires Dept. of Safety-approved handgun safety courses to contain instruction on secure storage
- Codified Governor's executive order to expedite reporting of records into the state background check system (reduced time from 30 days to 72 hours)
- Increased funding for school safety and mental health, including funds to provide more school resource officers