



# CAPITOL HALL — REPORT —



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## **Promoting Self-Defense and Tax Relief**

**Senate Bill 342:** I am excited to announce support for the *Texas Constitutional Carry Act (SB 342)*, which Senator Don Huffines has filed. Senators Konni Burton (*Colleyville*), Brandon Creighton (*Conroe*), and Lois Kolkhorst (*Brenham*) have also placed their support behind the bill. This legislation would allow law-abiding Texans who are eligible for a concealed handgun license (*CHL*) to carry a handgun in public without having to go through the licensing process. Many people have voiced incorrectly concerns that this bill would unconditionally allow anyone who is a citizen to carry a handgun, but let me assure you; the language of the bill, as it is now written, would only allow people who are eligible to obtain a *CHL* to carry a handgun, and it explicitly creates an offense for those who are ineligible for a *CHL* to carry a handgun. Many law-abiding citizens do not have the time or funds to go through the process of obtaining a *CHL*, and by requiring a license state law is prohibiting them from exercising their God-given right of self-defense. The law should not discriminate against the citizens it is supposed to serve; it should, as it does, prohibit those with a proven history of violence or who are members of a street gang, for example, from carrying a handgun, and this bill accomplishes these protections. This law upholds the provisions that currently regulate where a *CHL*-holder may carry a handgun; it mainly repeals restrictions on how a person carries a handgun and the requirement to obtain a license. This law does not make it easier for criminals to obtain or carry a handgun; it simply makes it easier for law-abiding citizens to protect themselves from such criminals.

With many instances of violence in our society nowadays, it is important to me that the legislature look for ways to promote the rights of citizens to defend themselves easily. This isn't the time for half-measures. We were elected by the people of Texas to be bold and to prudently champion our Second Amendment freedoms. *SB 342* accomplishes that, which is why I am encouraging all my fellow legislators to vote for it. Let's start a new day in Texas; the people are ready for a change.

**Senate Bill 515 & Senate Bill 516:** On another front, I joined Senator Bettencourt and other senators presenting a bill that would bring tax relief to property owners and businesses. *SB 515* would allow more homestead owners to be exempted from school taxes by raising the homestead-value eligible for exemption from \$15,000 to \$30,000, which would provide significant relief for low-income families. As for businesses, *SB 516* will allow businesses to keep inventory for a longer period without it being taxed. The "Freeport exemption" of 1989 allowed businesses this relief, but only for 175 days. *SB 516* would increase that time to 365 days in order to decrease the tax burden that businesses bear. The Texas Legislature should adopt these changes and ardently pursue more changes that will provide more relief for taxpayers and more respect for property rights. I am currently looking into legislation that would further promote these aspects, and I look forward to helping my senate colleagues do the same.

Many will inevitably be concerned about the effect these reliefs will have on state funding for public schools, but I assure you that Texas does not have (and these bills will not create) a revenue problem. We have a spending problem, and we need to spend more efficiently and to appropriate funds only where the Texas Constitution directs us. If we realign our fiscal policy to the Constitution, with efficiency, we will invariably release funds that we can then apply to those constitutional functions, such as funding schools.



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