



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

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The Honorable Nicole Collier
Chair, House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairman Collier and Members of the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence,

I write you today to request your support for House Bill 86, which will criminalize celebratory gunfire. This legislation was filed by state Rep. Armando Martinez, who was, himself, hit by celebratory gunfire shortly after midnight in 2017, while celebrating New Year's Eve with his family. It could have been much worse — his kids were standing just a few feet in front of him.

HB 86 will make it a Class A misdemeanor to discharge a weapon without an intended target, and would make it a first-degree felony if the gunfire resulted in serious bodily injury or death.

At present, there is no state law that specifically addresses celebratory gunfire. It is subject to a patchwork of local laws that deal with the reckless discharge of a weapon. One only needs to witness the endless eruption of gunfire on holiday evenings to know that irresponsible gun owners are disregarding these local laws.

As Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo said, "What goes up, must come down, and we should not play Russian roulette with the lives of our families." Fortunately, Rep. Martinez has fully recovered. Others may not be so lucky. Celebratory gunfire is a tradition that must end. I urge your support in passing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor