

Testimony from Randi Thompson
Nevada Firearms Coalition PAC
Re: SB156
For the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Government Affairs
March 5, 2026

[SB 156](#) would have created the Office for the Prevention of Gun Violence within the Office of the Attorney General. It was amended during the 2025 session to “appoint” a Special Counsel for the Prevention of Gun Violence in the Attorney General’s office.

The bill passed both houses along party lines in the 2025 session and was vetoed by the Governor. In his statement, the Governor said: “Because SB 156 injects too much political influence into an issue that demands careful, sensitive, and impartial treatment, I cannot support it.”

We concur with the Governor’s assessment. As the Governor stated in his veto message: “By granting this office broad authority over data collection, policy advising, and grant distribution, the bill opens the door to selective interpretation and ideological influence over firearms policy.”

Additionally, his statement said that the absence of clearly defined limits for the Special Counsel’s role raises the risk of unchecked expansion and administrative overreach in shaping gun related policies.

A more neutral, public health-oriented agency would be better suited to lead such efforts without the risk of politicization. Preserving public trust-and constitutional rights requires that we address gun violence through nonpartisan, balanced means.

That is why we remain opposed to SB156.

Twelve states have created a gun violence prevention office, yet only one state, California, has seen any kind of reduction in gun violence, though it’s impossible to prove that the office had anything to do with it.

I want to emphasize something important: the Nevada Firearms Coalition shares the goal of reducing violence in our communities. We want fewer Nevadans harmed by crime, and we are committed to working with this body on policies that meaningfully reduce the misuse of firearms and keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

We have supported legislation to increase penalties for crimes when firearms are used maliciously, such as SB 274 in the 2019 session.

Senator Cannizzaro actually sponsored a bill for us a few sessions ago that would have increased jail time for prohibited possessors who used guns in a crime. Unfortunately, that bill never made it out of committee.

We have worked on legislation related to safe gun storage and have advocated removing the sales tax on gun safes in order to encourage responsible gun storage practices.

We have proposed bills to allow students who want to protect themselves on college campuses and to allow firearms to be securely stored in locked vehicles on school property.

While we may not always agree on policy approaches, we remain committed to constructive engagement on issues that can improve safety.

Looking at the broader data, national trends indicate that gun violence has declined in recent years. [Everytown Research](#) and the FBI data shows assault-related gun deaths and injuries are declining. Annual gun homicides decreased by 7 percent in 2022, 13 percent in 2023, and 26 percent through the first quarter of 2024.

Public mass shootings understandably receive significant attention and concern, but they represent a very small share of overall gun-related homicides. [A U.S. Department of Justice](#) analysis under President Obama, and the [Congressional Research Service](#), found that mass shootings accounted for less than one percent of gun homicides in the United States since 2010.

While I don't want to downplay violence related to guns, more people in Nevada die in car accidents than are killed in a **homicide** by a gun. The most recent data available showed that in 2022 there were 416 traffic fatalities in Nevada, while about 160 homicides by guns. That does not include suicides.

More than half of firearm deaths in the United States are suicides, which underscores the importance of mental health and prevention efforts.

The bottom line is: gun incidents attract a lot of media attention.

But the reality is: violence is violence. To target just one type of violence is to ignore that we need to focus on preventing violence in general, and mental health in particular.

Guns are inanimate objects, just like cars, knives, baseball bats, or semi-trucks are. When used properly, none of these will cause harm. Yet in the hands of those who want to do harm, they can be deadly.

Yet when a drunk driver kills a person, we blame the driver. But when someone uses a gun to kill someone, we blame the gun.

Ultimately, violence is a complex social problem. Firearms are one tool that can be misused, but addressing violence effectively requires attention to mental health, crime prevention, community safety, and enforcement against those who illegally possess weapons.

We support reducing violence in Nevada, but creating this office or position has not proven to work in other states.

But that doesn't mean we don't want to help reduce violence in Nevada. The 2nd amendment protects citizens' ability to legally possess firearms.

But with that Right comes responsibilities.

That is why the Nevada Firearms Coalition, the NRA, and many other organizations that fight to protect the constitutional rights to legally bear arms, have a plethora of programs that are designed to teach people how to responsibly and safely use and store firearms.

There are programs on how to safely store guns in your home and car, as theft of firearms from homes and cars is a leading cause of illegal firearms. There are many hunter safety course and Conceal Carry courses that millions of Americans take each year.

Protecting children from accessing firearms is another issue we take seriously.

Eddie Eagle is an NRA program that aims to help Pre-K through 4th graders learn four steps to take if they find a gun: Stop, Don't Touch, Run Away, and Tell a Grown-up. The NRA has been able to educate over **35 million children** since the programs start in the late 1980s.

NRA Home Firearm Safety Course is a non-shooting course and teaches students the basic knowledge, skills, and to explain the attitude necessary for the safe handling and storage of firearms and ammunition in the home.

NRA Refuse To Be A Victim is an award-winning, non-firearm personal safety seminar teaching proactive crime prevention, situational awareness, and risk reduction techniques. Open to all ages, it helps annually over 170,000 people develop personal safety strategies for home, travel, and cyber security.

The Nevada Firearms Coalition offers the Annie Oakly Women's Program, a **free** program for women who want to learn to safely use a gun for self-protection. This weekly class has trained thousands of women in the Las Vegas area.

We are also advocates for a strong concealed carry program. Over 22 million Americans have concealed carry permits. I am one of them. Yet I have not shot a gun in years. My husband and I own 5 firearms, all of which are safely stored. We own firearms for the simple reason that we live in a dangerous world, and we have the right to defend our lives and our home.

Women are increasingly represented among permit-holders, as are Black Americans. They appear to be the group that has experienced the largest increase in concealed carry, growing 321% faster than whites.

Permit holders are generally highly law-abiding citizens. FBI data shows that armed civilians - including concealed carry permit holders - have stopped a small number of active-shooter incidents, demonstrating that responsible firearm ownership can sometimes play a role in personal defense.

FBI data confirms that armed civilians—including concealed-carry permit holders—have stopped some active-shooter attacks, though they account for roughly 4–5% of cases.

Unfortunately, bad guys don't get CCWs.

They don't buy guns from guns stores because they won't pass a background check. About [90% of criminals](#) who used a gun in a crime did not obtain it from a retail gun store. The underground market and theft are common sources of guns. Criminal access to guns often happens outside legal channels, which is why enforcement against criminal misuse of firearms remains critical.

Violence is a complex problem, and no single policy will solve it. That's why we should focus on solutions that target criminals, promote responsible ownership, and address the root causes of violence."

The Nevada Firearms Coalition believes we can work together on policies that focus on criminals, promote responsible ownership, and improve safety in our communities.

While we respectfully oppose SB 156, we remain committed to working with members of this body on solutions that can genuinely reduce violence in Nevada.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.