Tennessee Gun Owners

TGO 2026 State Legislative Candidate Survey

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Question 1

Emergency Risk Protection Order or 'Red Flag' laws would allow judges to order the confiscation of a citizen's firearm(s) based on hearsay evidence, in court hearings where the accused may not even be allowed to testify on their behalf. In practice, these laws create a process to strip away a citizens' firearms and rights who have not been convicted of any crime with no due process and no ability for them to defend themselves in court of law - as we have seen in states like Indiana, Florida and even attempts to pass them here in Tennessee.

If elected, would you oppose any Emergency Risk Protection Order or 'Red Flag' gun law that violates due process rights, strips gun owners of their Second Amendment freedoms, and does nothing to stop violent criminals?

Question 1 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 2

Tennessee's preemption statute (T.C.A. § 39-17-1314) is intended to keep local governments from passing rogue gun control. However, the Memphis City Council willfully violated state law by attempting to place a sweeping local handgun and "assault weapon" ban on their municipal ballot, which was only stopped after a costly lawsuit in November 2025.

If elected, would you sponsor or cosponsor legislation that establishes personal civil fines, loss of public funding, and cause-for-termination penalties for any local official or municipal administrator who knowingly votes for or enforces a local firearm ordinance in violation of state preemption?

Question 2 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 3

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), commonly known as "Red Flag" laws, allow judges to order the confiscation of a citizen's firearms based on hearsay evidence, often without a prior hearing where the accused can defend themselves. While Governor Bill Lee signed legislation in 2024 to block local municipal red flag laws, the threat of state-level or federal-backed red flag policies remains.

Will you publicly oppose and vote NO on any "Red Flag" gun confiscation or extreme risk protection order legislation in Tennessee, regardless of any compromises offered?

Question 3 Answer

Yes

Question 4

T.C.A. § 39-17-1311 historically prohibited carrying firearms in public parks, playgrounds, and civic centers. Although the August 2025 court ruling struck down this location ban as unconstitutional under the Second Amendment, the ban remains in the written statutes.

If elected, would you support legislation to fully and permanently repeal T.C.A. § 39-17-1311 to ensure law-abiding Tennesseans are never disarmed while protecting their families in public parks and recreational areas?

Question 4 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 5

While the legislature has made strides in allowing restricted, designated school employees to serve as school guardians, ordinary law-abiding adult citizens with a valid handgun carry permit are still strictly banned from carrying firearms on the campuses of state-funded public colleges and universities.

If elected, will you support legislation that allows law-abiding adults who possess a valid handgun carry permit to carry concealed firearms on public college and university campuses in Tennessee?

Question 5 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 6

In the 2026 legislative session, the General Assembly passed SB 350 to prohibit landlords from placing lease restrictions on a tenant’s right to possess, carry, store, or transport firearms on leased premises. However, public housing authorities and private corporate landlords continue to seek loopholes to disarm vulnerable Tennesseans.

If elected, will you cosponsor and vote yes on legislation to strengthen and expand SB 350, ensuring that no landlord or housing authority in Tennessee can ever deny a tenant their constitutional right to keep and bear arms for self-defense inside their home?

Question 6 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 7

In recent legislative sessions, anti-gun politicians have introduced bills designed to ban standard-capacity magazines and common semiautomatic rifles like the AR-15, dishonestly labeling them as “assault weapons” or “prohibited weapons.”

Do you oppose any legislation banning the manufacture, sale, transfer, or possession of semiautomatic rifles, shotguns, handguns, or standard-capacity magazines in the State of Tennessee?

Question 7 Answer

Yes

Question 8

Under the anti-commandeering doctrine, the federal government cannot force state and local police to enforce federal regulatory schemes. A Second Amendment Protection Act (SAPA) would formally forbid Tennessee law enforcement from assisting the federal government in enforcing unconstitutional federal gun laws or unilateral ATF agency rules.

Would you support a Second Amendment Protection Act (SAPA) in Tennessee that prohibits the federal commandeering of state and local law enforcement resources for gun control enforcement, backed by strict civil penalties for violations?

Question 8 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 9

National gun control groups continue to lobby for “Universal Background Checks” on private sales, which would outlaw a father from passing a family rifle down to his son or a citizen selling a firearm to a neighbor without going through a licensed dealer, creating a de facto federal gun registry of all private transfers.

Do you oppose legislation that would ban private party firearm sales, transfers, or gifts between law-abiding Tennessee citizens?

Question 9 Answer

Yes

Question 10

Tennessee successfully enacted legislation to ban payment processors from using firearm-retailer-specific Merchant Category Codes (MCC) to monitor the credit card transactions of gun owners. However, financial institutions continue to use ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) scoring to “debank” gun dealers and manufacturers.

If elected, will you support legislation to strengthen Tennessee’s financial preemption laws, prohibiting any financial institution doing business in the state from debanking or discriminating against lawful firearms businesses, and ensuring state funds are never deposited in institutions that participate in anti-gun ESG schemes?

Question 10 Answer

- Sponsor
- Co-Sponsor

Question 11

In your own words, what does the Second Amendment mean to you?

Question 11 Answer

Our founding fathers saw how critically important it was to give citizens the right to defend themselves. Therefore, they gave us the 2nd amendment guaranteeing law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear arms without government infringement. I believe it is the government's job to protect this right.

Name (As it will appear on the ballot)

Tom Leatherwood

Email Address

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District Number	Chamber	Party Affiliation
99	Tennessee House	Republican

E-Signature

✔ I hereby submit the answers to this survey as my solemn word that, if elected, I will vote on these issues as I have indicated in this survey.

Signature

Date

Paper Survey

Reviewed

- Yes