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“MORE ACCOUNTABILITY, NOT LESS, NEEDED TO KEEP KIDS SAFE”: Eckhardt Votes Against Bill Blocking Gun Transparency in Texas Foster Homes

AUSTIN – Last week, the Texas Senate passed SB 1524 by Senator Middleton, which prohibits the Department of Family and Protective Services from seeking information about the presence of guns in potential foster homes. The bill creates a \$5,000 penalty for collecting detailed information about guns in foster homes and using that information in the determination of placing a foster youth.

According to the CDC, **firearms are a leading cause of injury-related death among children**, with unintentional injuries being the top cause of death of children and adults. With among the most permissive gun safety laws in the nation, **Texas has seen at least seven children under the care of DFPS die as a result of gunshot wounds** between 2020-22 when most recent state data was released.

Senator Eckhardt made the following statement about the passage of SB 1524:

“From the tragic number of suicides in our state to violent mass shooting incidents, **this bill represents an extreme position on gun safety**. This bill inhibits the ability of agencies to make informed decisions, puts vulnerable children at greater risk, and tips the scales further in favor of lawless gun owners. **Texas should be moving toward more accountability in child welfare, not less—and that starts with ensuring we know whether a home is safe.**”

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Sarah Eckhardt is the third-term Democratic State Senator representing District 14, comprising Austin and surrounding areas. She serves on the Administration, Border Security, Nominations, and Veterans Affairs committees in the 89th Legislative Session, and has previously served on the Water, Agriculture, & Rural Affairs and Local Government committees. A proud UT Law and Public Affairs alum, Senator Eckhardt was the first woman to serve as Travis County Judge from 2014-2020.