

I am in favor of the enactment of Senate Bill 554. Foremost, I want to voice my strong support for Representative Clem's proposed -18 amendment, which I would like to address here. Last October, a contingent of Proud Boys openly carried firearms and marched through Bush Park. This was a situation when an individual's right to bear arms clearly conflicted with the park goers' experience of personal safety. Those of us who meet our friends at the park; who play with our kids at the park; who walk or jog or simply contemplate nature in the park, do not expect to be confronted with individuals or groups openly carrying firearms. This behavior is both disturbing and dangerous in a park setting, and it cannot be construed as for the purpose of "self-defense." As a regular park goer, I see open carrying of firearms as menacing to my safety and security. This perceived threat -- one that is felt by me and anyone who enjoys time in our public parks -- needs to be taken into account.