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To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation  
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist  
Re: Senate Bill 554  
Date: February 22, 2021

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Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

On behalf of OSBA membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 554.

Senate Bill 554 would give local governments, including school districts and Education Service Districts, the option to adopt regulations prohibiting individuals from carrying licensed concealed handguns.

SB 554 gives districts a tool to address legitimate concerns of safety and danger to students and staff. The bill contains no mandates and would expand the ability of these districts to locally make decisions to control the district campus. The bill allows sensitive environments like schools, to keep weapons off of campus.

While gun violence is rare, it occurs with enough frequency that school districts should be permitted to choose to address this concern. According to reporting by the Associated Press, more than 30 publicly reported mishaps had been reported involving firearms brought onto school grounds. Constitutional rights in education are important. Community rights to carry legal weapons for personal protection are important. But school districts should be able to consider and balance these rights in a public process against student rights to access education freely and without fear.

Please support SB 554. Thank you for your time and attention.