

**Ellis County & District Attorney
Patrick M. Wilson**



**State Representative HD10
John Wray**

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CONTACT: Patrick Wilson / Tabatha Vasquez
PHONE: 972-825-5035 / 512-463-0516

Rep. Wray, DA Wilson Work with Local Officials to Keep Students Safe

WAXAHACHIE – In the wake of the local high school shooting and the tragedy that occurred in Parkland, FL, State Representative John Wray and Ellis County District Attorney Patrick Wilson announced steps they are taking to increase the safety of our schools and our students.

"In the wake of another tragic school shooting, we can all agree that immediate action is required to keep our students safe. The collective effort of local law enforcement, the district attorney, school administrators, and our legislative branch is required to find a comprehensive solution to this issue. Our community and school leaders work throughout the year to make our campuses safer, and I want to hear from them how we can better equip schools with resources they need to accomplish this important task," stated Representative John Wray.

Later this month, Representative Wray and DA Wilson will co-host a meeting with school officials and local law enforcement from across Ellis County. The topic of the meeting is school safety; in particular, acts of violence and threats of violence against students and teachers. The goal is to foster a dialogue between the parties in attendance and to help everyone understand their respective obligations and limitations. The meeting also serves as a brainstorming platform to generate new ideas to optimize the safety of our children.

Secondarily, Ellis County District Attorney Patrick Wilson has proposed legislation that Rep. Wray will file to make the punishment uniform for anyone committing an act of violence with a firearm on a primary or secondary school campus.

"After the recent Italy school shooting, my office discovered a gap in the law which would prevent us, or any other district attorneys, from prosecuting this act as anything more than a 2nd degree felony. Had the assailant killed anyone, shot a public servant such as a teacher, or shot anyone under the age of 15, he would likely would be facing a 1st degree felony, which carries a sentence of five to ninety-nine years in a correctional facility. We need to close

this hole in the law and punish those guilty of school violence to the fullest extent possible," explained DA Patrick Wilson.

The proposed legislation would make it a 1st degree felony to commit an aggravated assault with a firearm on the premises of a primary or secondary school. This would provide consistency in the law, enable prosecutors to seek justice for the victims of such events, and provide the greatest amount of protection to children and others attending or participating in events on school grounds.

Wray and Patrick closed by stating, "These are the first steps toward preventing and alleviating threats and violence from touching the lives of our students, teachers, and administrators. We are opening a dialogue in Ellis County and the state of Texas to facilitate change. Ultimately, we cannot forget all those affected by these horrific tragedies. Our hearts are heavy for all the lives cut far too short, and for their families, friends, and classmates. "

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