

Tennesseans Push State Legislature to Address Gun Rights and Safety and Other Priority Issues by Establishing Bipartisan Solutions Committee

Citizens equipped with their own consensus-based solution proposals take democracy into their own hands at the Capitol following a months-long process

NASHVILLE — This morning, as the 2024 Tennessee legislative session commences, a group of ideologically diverse citizens (the “[TN11](#)”) gathered at the State Capitol to unveil five citizen-authored proposals on gun rights and safety and urge lawmakers to create a bipartisan Solutions Committee. They’re asking for this Committee to explore existing consensus amongst Tennesseans on priority issues, including gun rights and safety, which has long been divisive across the state and the nation.

All 132 members of the Tennessee General Assembly, as well as Gov. Bill Lee and Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, were invited to the unveiling, which took place in the Legislative Lounge, across from the Senate Chamber and just beyond the House Floor. A bipartisan group of Republican and Democratic legislators were in attendance, including Reps. Scott Cepicky (R-64) G.A. Hardaway (D-93), Torrey Harris (D-91), Dave Wright (R-19) and Bo Mitchell (D-50) as well as Sens. Charlane Oliver (D-19), London Lamar (D-33), Heidi Campbell (D-20), and Art Swann (R-2). Staff members for Sens. Raumesh Akbari (D-29), Sara Kyle (D-30), and London Lamar (D-33) were also present.

The TN11 presented five solutions proposals:

- Allow courts to temporarily remove someone’s firearms if they are deemed to be a danger to themselves or others based on certain criteria showing they are at risk of committing violence
- Develop and promote tools for responsible gun ownership and offer training on how to use these tools
- Broaden the School Resource Officer (SRO) role beyond standard law enforcement to include human services practices, such as mental health first aid, trauma-informed care, and principles of child development
- Reduce Adverse Community Environments and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and adult trauma that leads to gun violence by investing in youth and community development
- Develop gun issue literacy resources for schools, communities, and the media.

The proposals, which can be viewed in full [here](#), were created this August at a three-day “solution session” hosted by [Starts With Us](#) and [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#). They were subsequently shared online, and 30,267 Tennesseans representing all 95 counties weighed in on them. During the five-week public feedback period, the aforementioned proposals received majority support, meaning more than 50% of respondents agreed with them.

“We are told that solutions are not possible — that we are too divided, too polarized, maybe even too dangerous to be trusted to hold space for one another. The real danger is that not only do American citizens have the capacity to find common ground, but we are great at it,” says Adam Luke, a member of the TN11 and a licensed family and marriage therapist from Columbia, Tennessee. “We are calling on legislators to lean into this strength by creating a bipartisan Solutions Committee that would put forth proposals representing existing common ground amongst Tennesseans.”

The TN11 is comprised of 11 citizens who live across the state and have different lived experiences and stances on gun policy. The solution session they participated in was part of a Starts With Us civic experiment called [Citizen Solutions](#), which empowers Americans to tackle divisive issues.

“Through my involvement in *Citizen Solutions*, I’ve witnessed the transformative power of conversation — the ability for individuals to lower their guard, listen for understanding, and speak to be understood,” says Jaila Hampton, a member of the TN11 and a college student from Memphis. “Today, we implore lawmakers to not only consider the proposed solutions but also to embody the spirit of constructive dialogue as they commence their own legislative session.”

“Through *Citizen Solutions*, we set out to bring solutions back to the center of our political discourse and our lives,” says Ashley Phillips, Head of Programs at Starts With Us. “Tennessee was the first state in the nation to participate, and its citizens were up to the challenge. Now, it’s time for lawmakers to follow their lead.”

Photos and soundbites from the event are available for the media [here](#).

To learn more about Starts With Us visit www.startswith.us. Media inquiries: please contact media@startswith.us.

About Starts With Us

Starts With Us is a nonpartisan civic movement equipping Americans to overcome toxic polarization and effectively solve our country’s toughest problems. In addition to more than 3 million followers committed to engaging constructively across lines of difference, Starts With Us’ mission is supported by 240+ ideologically diverse leaders in business, entertainment, journalism, faith, sports, academia, and national defense. Starts With Us is a project of the [Lubetzky Family Foundation](#). To join the movement, visit www.startswith.us.

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