

DISCIPLINING SCHOOL KIDS DOESN'T REQUIRE WEAPONS

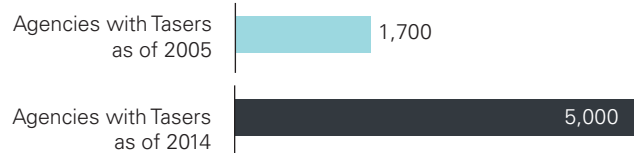
BAN TASERS & PEPPER SPRAY IN TEXAS SCHOOLS

SCHOOL POLICE OFFICERS INCREASINGLY USE TASERS & PEPPER SPRAY TO STOP MISBEHAVIOR



A review of **16 TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS** in 2010 found the vast majority allowed school police to carry pepper spray, pepper foam, Tasers and/or Taser-like devices. Only **THREE** school districts prohibited them.²

School-based law enforcement agencies armed with Tasers almost tripled between 2005 and 2014.¹



Available data shows troubling racial disparities. In one large Texas school district...

African-American students made up only **12%** of the student body...



TASERS ARE PROHIBITED IN ALL TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES – but they are allowed in Texas schools with almost no oversight or regulations.

USE OF PEPPER SPRAY in Texas juvenile justice facilities is only allowed **IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES** (like a riot) – but its use in schools is unregulated.

SCHOOLS ARE SAFE. In the 2012-13 school year, **LESS THAN 1 PERCENT OF STUDENTS** in Texas schools were disciplined for possessing a weapon or assaulting a school district employee.⁴

Studies have found **VERY LOW INCIDENCES OF CRIME IN LARGE, URBAN TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS**, including a 1994 study conducted when juvenile crime was at its highest.⁵

TASERS AND PEPPER SPRAY CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2013,

Noe Niño de Rivera, 17, was Tased by a school police officer at Cedar Creek High School, near Austin, after he tried to break up a fight between two girls.

He suffered traumatic



when he fell and hit his head, and was in a coma for more than 50 days.

Multiple witnesses and video confirm that Noe was not breaking the law and was not acting aggressively.

WHILE THERE IS NO CURRENT RESEARCH ON THE SPECIFIC EFFECTS OF THESE WEAPONS ON YOUTH, STUDIES SHOW HOW HARMFUL THEY CAN BE TO LESS VULNERABLE ADULTS:

Between 2001 and 2013, a total of **540 PEOPLE DIED AFTER BEING TASED** by police in the U.S.



With **37 DEATHS**, Texas is third nationwide in the number of deaths **ASSOCIATED WITH TASERS**.⁶

Studies on adults document **SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS**

caused by pepper spray, including intense pain, swelling, and blistering of the skin;

difficulty breathing and even asphyxiation; hypertension increasing the risk for stroke or heart attack; and permanent damage to nerve tissue and eyes. **CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK.**



Taser International product warnings state that **CHILDREN MAY BE AT INCREASED RISK OF DEATH** compared to others if they are Tased in the chest.



PEPPER SPRAY has been used in crowded school hallways and cafeterias in several Texas school districts, resulting in **INJURY TO STUDENTS WHO WERE MERELY BYSTANDERS**.



SUPPORT SAFER AND MORE EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES:

BAN TASER AND PEPPER SPRAY USE ON STUDENTS

TRAIN SCHOOL POLICE OFFICERS

REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO COLLECT DATA

More effective policing strategies exist. The possible dangers associated with these weapons are too high to allow their use in schools. Overly punitive policing strategies, such as Taser and pepper spray use, have been shown to worsen misbehavior by alienating students and creating negative school climates that decrease school safety.

School resource officers should be trained in de-escalation techniques that lessen reliance on force to break up fights and actually reduce injuries to officers.

Schools should document and report on the use of Tasers and pepper spray on students so the impact of these weapons is better understood.

¹ E-mail from Taser International to Deborah Fowler, Deputy Director, Texas Appleseed (March 14, 2014).

² Texas Appleseed, *Texas' School to Prison Pipeline: Ticketing, Arrest & Use of Force in Schools* (2010).

³ Id.

⁴ Texas Education Agency, *State Level Annual Discipline Summary* (2014).

⁵ Texas Education Agency, *Texas Independent School District Crime Report* (1995).

⁶ Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2013*