

WHY GUNS DO NOT BELONG ON CAMPUS

WHAT ADVOCATES FOR CONCEALED CARRY SAY

"The issue comes down to whether you support the right to carry on campus or whether you support rapists having free access to unarmed victims. It's that simple"

"We Want to Prevent Another Virginia Tech"

The Facts: The Virginia Tech Review Panel Report specifically recommended against allowing guns on campus. The panel "recommends that guns be banned on campus grounds and in buildings" (VI-5). The panel was chaired by the lead investigator of the 9-11 attack on the Pentagon (Gerald Massengill) and had as one of its members Tom Ridge, former Secretary of Homeland Security.

"Crime Rates are Lower on Campuses that Allow Concealed Weapons"

The Facts: There is no evidence to support this claim. Since Colorado passed a similar law in the 2012-2013 academic year, reported rapes have increased 25% in 2012 and 36% in 2013 (15.2 and 20.8 per 100,000 respectively). The rate of reported rapes on campuses in Utah (a state allowing concealed weapons on campus) has increased from 6.6 per 100,000 (2010) to 14 per 100,000 (2013).

The statistics vary, but evidence clearly shows that for every successful use of a gun to defend one's life, body, or property there are between three and four uses of said weapon against the owner.

"Female College Students Need Guns to Defend Themselves Against Predators"

The Facts: In the vast majority of sexual assaults committed on college and university campuses, the victim knows the perpetrator. Victims of acquaintance and date rape are unlikely to be carrying a weapon or have the opportunity to use one at the time of the assault. Were this law passed, the perpetrator of the crime is equally likely to be carrying a weapon.

Statistics show that women are 500% more likely to be killed by an intimate partner if a firearm is present.

The law's sponsors have also argued that sexual predators near campuses pose a grave threat to female students despite the fact that no evidence shows that registered sex offenders living close to college campuses pose a threat to people on those campuses.

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THE FACTS

Campuses are Very Safe Spaces

A wealth of research shows that even in more violence prone neighborhoods, campuses tend to be safe spaces. In 2013, the homicide rate at post-secondary institutions was 0.1 per 100,000 compared to 4.4 per 100,000 off campus. A 2001 study found that the rates were 0.07 per 100,000 on campus versus 5.7 per 100,000 off campus (and 14.1 per 100,000 for persons aged 17-29). Source: Clary Act Data (U.S. Dept. of Education) and FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2013.

The Department of Justice concluded that 93% of violent crimes in which college students are victims happen while the victims were not on campus.

Increased Risk for Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college-aged students, exceeded only by accidental death (mostly from motor vehicle accidents) On average, about 1,100 college students commit suicide each year while another 24,000 attempt suicide. The risk is even higher for graduate students. Whereas suicide attempts by overdose (the most common method) are fatal only 3% of the time, suicide attempts by firearms are fatal more than 90% of the time. Easy access to weapons on campus (one's own or a weapon belonging to a roommate or friend) would exacerbate an already problematic issue and would result in many of the 24,000 unsuccessful attempts becoming fatal events.

Alcohol Use/Abuse on Campuses and Guns Do Not Mix

Alcohol use and abuse are higher on campuses than in the general public. At the same time, the average college student—even at 21 and 22 years old—has not yet reached emotional or intellectual maturity. Alcohol, impulsivity, heightened emotions, and guns simply do not mix.

A 2007 study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that “[N]early half of America’s 5.4 million full-time college students abuse drugs or drink alcohol on binges at least once a month”

Alcohol is involved in 95% of violent crimes on campuses.

Campus Law Enforcement Opposition

The international Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, Inc. (IACLEA) issued the following statement: *“IACLEA Board of Directors believes ‘conceal carry’ initiatives do not make campuses safer. There is no credible evidence to suggest that the presence of students carrying concealed weapons would reduce violence on our college campuses”*

The law makes the work of law enforcement harder rather than easier. Campus police would have to take added precautions when responding to calls, when stopping cars on campus, when dealing with unruly or intoxicated individuals, etc. In the worst-case scenario (an “active shooter”

on campus), police arriving on scene would be less likely to be able to determine who the actual shooter is.

Similarly, the requirements to obtain a concealed carry permit in the state of Florida are notoriously lax. People receiving permits are not required to have extensive training in the safe use of handguns.

Faculty, Student, Administrator and Parent Opposition

The vast majority of Florida's public college and university faculty have come out in strong opposition to this legislation. Student groups across the state have overwhelmingly voiced opposition to this measure. University Presidents (and other administrators) have worked behind the scenes to oppose this law.¹ The majority of parents of college students oppose this law.

During testimony last year in Tallahassee (for the various committees that reviewed the law), 70-90% of those testifying strongly opposed the law (but the law kept being passed out of committee on strict party-line votes).

Costs to Campuses

If this law is passed, the costs to campuses will be very high. University and college presidents estimate between \$1 million and \$4.5 million will be required to prepare each of their campuses for concealed carry on campus (to include vests for campus police, signage, and metal detectors at specific places to include sporting venues). Costs may run as high as \$60 million in new costs just for the Florida State College system (excluding the university system). Costs would include the need to hire full armed police officers on campuses that before had trained security (many without weapons) as well as metal detectors for arenas and stadiums.

A campus carry law in Idaho cost that state's public colleges and universities \$3.7 million; the Kansas Board of Regents has estimated costs associated with the law of \$5 million to \$9 million; the University of Houston and the University of Texas system have estimated costs of up to \$47 million to prepare for concealed weapons on campus.

Lack of Definition of What Constitutes a Public "Campus"

The law does not differentiate between different kinds of campuses or places on campuses. Were the legislation passed, it would be difficult if not illegal for campus health centers/mental health centers or even university hospitals to regulate or control guns in their midst.

Lost/Misplaced and Stolen Weapons

Additional guns on campus would inevitably lead to misplaced weapons (consider the number of backpacks, purses, etc. misplaced on campus). Guns in backpacks and purses could be prime targets for theft, especially so when/if those bags are misplaced or left unattended.

Abridgment of Academic Freedom & Forums for Discussion

The threat of students carrying concealed weapons inherently abridges academic freedom, a major tenet of higher education. Many issues and ideas presented in college-level classes are necessarily controversial (some merely controversial to specific students uncomfortable with ideas that challenge their world view). This can lead to heated debate. The possibility that a student(s) may be armed with a gun could censor what professors say as well as what students say. Neither students nor their instructors should have to fear for their safety in class.

No “Opt Out” Provisions

The legislation does not give campuses—via their respective Boards of Trustees (upon feedback from campus stakeholders) the right to opt out of the law (as similar legislation in other states have allowed).

Having a Concealed Weapon Does Not Correlate with Ability to Use the Weapon in a Crisis

Campus and municipal police (and former military weapons experts) oppose the law in part because the ability to use a weapon correctly—and thus not add to the chaos surrounding a violent encounter on campus—requires hundreds of hours of ongoing training. Getting a concealed weapons permit requires a gun, a form, a 2-3 hour class, and a fee. See

Florida’s Stand Your Ground Law will apply to campuses.

Immunity afforded under Florida’s “shoot first” law would extend to college campuses. A Tampa Bay Times report, released June 1, 2012, found that Florida’s shoot first law had “stymied prosecutors and confused judges,” and been used “to free killers and violent attackers whose self-defense claims seem questionable at best.” That report found that nearly 70 percent of those who had invoked the law had gone free. Source: Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: <http://smartgunlaws.org/stand-your-ground-policy-summary/>

More than a small percent of the campus population would meet the eligibility requirements for a concealed carry permit.

HB 4001/ SB 68 would allow not just students but faculty, staff, administrators and visitors to carry a gun, also. The average age of college students is older than ever before and depending on the campus, those eligible to carry a gun could exceed 20% of the campus population.

¹ Florida State University President John Thrasher, a former state senator with a long and unambiguous record as a conservative legislator, has repeatedly come out in strong opposition to this law (his family witnessed first hand some of the tragedies that would be exacerbated by the passing of this bill).