

Keep Guns Off College Campuses!

Vote NO on SB2376/HB1736 and SB1991/HB2131

Introduction	Current Legislative Status
<p>In the wake of several recent campus shootings, states are considering legislation on whether or not to allow guns on college campuses. For some colleges, these events point to a need to loosen existing firearm regulations and allow concealed weapons on campuses. Other colleges see the solution as tightening restrictions to keep guns off campuses (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).</p>	<p>Majority of college campuses ban concealed weapons, but this may be changing. Currently, 19 states ban concealed weapons on college and university campus; 23 states leave the decision to ban or allow concealed carry weapons up to the campus; and due to recent legislation, 8 states now have provisions that allow the carrying of concealed weapons on public postsecondary campuses (Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin) (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).</p>

Supporting Statements Regarding a Ban on Firearms on Campus

Relative safety of college campuses:

- “College campuses are safer than the communities surrounding them. 93% of the violence against students occurs off campus. The one reason? Colleges and universities have tightly controlled firearms” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).
- Crime rates on campuses are far lower than crime rates in the United States as a whole (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- Despite high-profile shootings like VA Tech and NIU, homicides at American colleges and universities remain rare events (The Keep Guns Off Campus Campaign, 2015).
- Jurisdictions with restrictive firearms legislation and lower firearms ownership tend to have lower levels of gun violence (World Health Organization, 2009; Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- A 2005 study (Loomis, Marshall, & Ta) found that workplaces where guns were permitted were 5 to 7 times more likely to be the site of workplace homicide when compared to workplaces where guns were prohibited.
- According to a study by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that examined 104 active-shooter events from 2000 to 2012, less than 3 percent of mass shootings were stopped by armed civilians (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2014).
- In 2013, the homicide rate at post secondary education institutions was 0.1 per 100,000 of enrollment, and by comparison, the criminal homicide rate in the United States was 4.4 per 100,000 (The Keep Guns Off Campus Campaign, 2015).

Public support is lacking:

- In 2013, 19 states introduced legislation to expand concealed carry laws to permit the carrying of weapons on campus in some regard. With only two bills passed, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).
- A 2013 poll of students at 15 Midwest colleges found that 78 percent opposed allowing concealed handguns on campus, and 79 percent said that they would not feel safe if faculty, students, or visitors were allowed to bring concealed guns onto their campuses (The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, 2015; Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- A 2013 poll of faculty members at 15 colleges across Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin found that 94 percent opposed concealed carry on campus (The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, 2015; Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).

Increased risk when firearms are permitted:

- There is scientific evidence that guns will increase violence (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- Gun availability is a risk factor for homicide (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- Higher levels of civilian gun ownership appeared to be a significant risk factor for the homicide of Law Enforcement Officers (Swedler, et al., 2015).
- Liberalization of gun access is associated with an increase in fatalities from guns (Ginwalla, et al., 2014).
- No credible evidence exists to show permissive Carrying Concealed Weapons (CCW) laws reduce crimes or make campuses safer. In fact, evidence suggests that CCW laws may actually increase crime and make campuses less safe (Legal Community Against Violence, n.d.; refers to Ayres & Donohue, 2003; Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- Important research confirms the common sense conclusion that more guns create more opportunity for injury and death, not less (Hemenway, Azarel, & Miller, 2001).
- Concealed weapons needlessly place students, faculty, staff, and visitors at increased risk for accidental shootings, drug and alcohol-related violence, and suicide (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- Having guns on campus increases the risk of successful suicide attempts by students (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- A 2002 study (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler) found that having a firearm was strongly associated with being threatened with a gun while at college. Additionally, students who reported having a firearm on campus reported that they engaged in behaviors risky to themselves and others.
- There is no statistical evidence that crime rates have decreased on the public campuses where firearms are permitted and therefore, there is no reason to believe that allowing legal gun owners to carry their weapons on the campuses of public colleges and universities will have any deterrent effect on campus crime (The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, 2015; Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).

Violation of campus self-governance principles and academic freedom:

- Academic institutions need to be able to make independent decisions about a wide range of issues that impact the educational enterprise.
- “Protecting free expression of teachers and students is the most obvious way in which academic freedom must be secured. Teachers must be able to address even the most controversial subjects, in their research and writing endeavors as well as in the classroom, without fear that they will be punished for challenging conventional thought or espousing provocative ideas. Students must have the same ability to pursue knowledge without risk of being penalized or restrained by those who might disagree with the students' views. All of these cherished values of our educational process would be greatly diminished if college classrooms were filled with armed students and teachers” (The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, n.d.).
- The National Rifle Association says that “an armed society is a polite society.” People won't say anything offensive, for fear of being shot (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- “If an armed campus is a polite campus, then students will miss a fundamentally important aspect of their college experience. Students ought to be able to voice their opinions, to argue with others, and to test new ideas without fear. The threat of violence that guns create challenges the liberty we have: the freedom of speech” (Dieterle & Koolage, 2014).
- “The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized the importance of respecting schools' rights to self-governance and independent decision-making. This principle of institutional autonomy has been enshrined in the constitutions of many states. Thus, college administrations must be free to set their own policies with respect to firearms” (The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, n.d.).

Adult Neurobiological Maturity:

- Adolescence and early adulthood is a period of substantial brain maturation with respect to brain structure and function (Steinberg, 2012).
- On average, most individuals reach adult neurobiological maturity by the age of 22 (Steinberg, 2012).
- During this developmental stage, individuals are, on average, not as mature as they will be when they become adults (Steinberg, 2012).
- Adolescents and young adults are more likely to engage in sensation seeking, less likely to control their impulses, and/or less likely to plan ahead (Steinberg, 2012).
- Adolescents and young adults are more likely than adults older than 25 to engage in risk taking behaviors such as binge-drink, smoke cigarettes, commit suicide, and engage in violent and other criminal behavior (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2015).