

The Faculty Senate of the Knoxville Campuses of the University of Tennessee

Resolution Opposing Legislation Legalizing Concealed Gun Carry by Students on University Property (HB 2102 and SB 2288), or Carrying a Concealed Gun Without a Permit on Campuses (HB 2661 and SB 2888)

This resolution was approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Council for presentation at the March, 2020 meeting of the UTK-UTIA Faculty Senate.

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate and Faculty of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville are concerned about campus safety, and the welfare of students, faculty, staff, and visitors to our campuses, and

WHEREAS students, faculty, staff, and visitors are occasionally exposed to threats and retaliation from disgruntled or disturbed individuals, and

WHEREAS the knowledge that individuals could be carrying concealed weapons could increase tension and potential danger in such situations, and

WHEREAS the presence of weapons can be a threat to academic integrity, and

WHEREAS colleges and universities need to retain the right to self-governance, and

WHEREAS more guns would probably result in more fatal suicide attempts, a particular concern given the fact that Tennessee's rate of suicide (16.87 per 100,000 residents) is higher than the national average (14.2 per 100,000), and that over 50% of suicides are caused by firearms, and that college students are particularly vulnerable,¹ and

WHEREAS by facilitating the escalation of disputes into violent and perhaps fatal confrontations, allowing guns to be carried by students and others on campus would increase the risk for gun-related accidents and violence both on campus and in surrounding communities, and

WHEREAS in the event of an attempted mass shooting, armed students and others who are not trained in how to respond in such a crisis, could open fire and injure or kill people, and

WHEREAS university and municipal police forces are the appropriate institutions and individuals to handle events of violence,

WHEREAS, The UTK Faculty Senate has taken positions against firearms on campus in response to legislative bills dating to 2011,² and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the Knoxville campuses of the University of Tennessee oppose allowing students the right to carry concealed weapons on campus as advocated in bills introduced into the Tennessee General Assembly as HB 2102 and SB 2288, and oppose widening the carrying of guns by others without permits as advocated in bills introduced into the Tennessee General Assembly as HB 2661 and SB 2888.

¹ These statistics come from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

² UTK Faculty Senate information on guns on campus may be found at <https://senate.utk.edu/firearms-on-campus/>