



Guns on Campus

Bottom Line: In recent years, gun lobby-backed legislation that would force colleges and universities to allow guns on campus has been introduced across the country. This legislation, which would create new dangers and burden schools with significant financial costs, is opposed by university stakeholders from police chiefs to students to college presidents. Statehouses should not override the public safety judgment of our colleges and universities, especially given the risk factors common to campus life.

- ❑ **The National Rifle Association (NRA) began its push to force colleges and universities to allow guns on campus following multiple high-profile campus shootings.**
 - **The NRA Model Bill:** In 2008, after a mass shooting at Virginia Tech that killed 32 people and a mass shooting at Northern Illinois University that killed 5 people, the NRA proposed, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) adopted, a model bill that would force colleges to allow guns on campus.¹
 - **States Have Overwhelmingly Rejected the NRA's Agenda:** The push to force guns onto college campuses has accelerated ever since—with bills that would force colleges to allow guns on campus introduced in 18 different states in both 2015 and 2016, 20 states in 2017, and 18 states in 2018.² Despite this push states have overwhelmingly rejected these bills.
- ❑ **The vast majority of states either prohibit guns on campus or else allow colleges to decide for themselves whether to allow guns on campus.³**
 - **Only 2 states force colleges to allow all concealed carry permit holders to carry guns everywhere on campus:** CO, UT.⁴
 - **10 other states require colleges to allow guns on campus in some circumstances:** AR, GA, ID, KS, MN, MS, OR, TN, TX, WI.⁵
- ❑ **Guns on campus would burden colleges with large new costs for security and insurance.**
 - **Kansas' guns on campus requirement will cost universities millions:** Three Kansas universities estimated that it would cost nearly \$2 million to secure their athletic facilities in order to comply with the Kansas law that forces colleges to allow guns on campus unless they implement burdensome security measures at each building where they choose to prohibit guns.⁶
 - **Idaho's guns on campus law is costing universities millions.** In 2014, Idaho passed legislation that forced colleges to allow people with "enhanced" permits to carry guns on campus. As a result, five state schools had to request more than \$3.7 million from the state to increase security in the first year alone.⁷
 - **The cost of guns on campus in Arizona was estimated at over \$13 million.** During a 2012 legislative fight, the Board of Regents estimated that allowing guns on campus would cost \$13.3 million in one-time expenses and \$3.1 million in annual costs.⁸ The bill was vetoed.
 - **Guns on campus legislation creates new insurance costs for colleges.** In 2011, the Houston Community College Board of Trustees estimated its insurance costs alone could rise as much as \$900,000 per year if a guns on campus bill passed.⁹



❑ **States that have recently passed legislation forcing colleges to allow guns on campus are struggling to deal with the consequences.**

- **Lawsuits and Faculty Retention:** In Texas, where a guns-on-campus bill passed in 2015, the implementation of guns on campus has been extremely contentious. Professors sued the State and the University of Texas, prominent faculty members have left to take jobs in other states, and educators have withdrawn from consideration for jobs at Texas universities.¹⁰
- **Injuries:** In Idaho, a professor with an “enhanced” carry permit unintentionally shot himself in the leg during a chemistry lab following the passage of a 2014 law that forced Idaho colleges to allow people with enhanced permits to carry guns on campus.¹¹ And in 2012, a 24-year-old permitted student in Utah unintentionally shot himself while walking on campus.¹²
- **Accidental Discharges:** In Texas, just weeks after a guns on campus law went into effect, a permit-holding student unintentionally discharged his gun in his dorm room.¹³ In Utah, another permit-holding student recently discharged his gun in a crowded cafeteria (Fortunately, the bullet hit only a light fixture and a table).¹⁴
- **Student Opposition:** In Texas, there have been large student protests. Further, students at Historically Black Colleges and LGBTQ students have expressed concerns about how the law will affect their communities – noting that they regularly face intimidation and complex interactions with law enforcement on campus.¹⁵

❑ **Campus stakeholders oppose guns on campus.**

- **Campus Police Chiefs:** In a 2008 survey of university police chiefs, 89 percent of the chiefs agreed that the most effective and important way to deal with gun use on campus is to prevent the use of guns at all.¹⁶
- **College Administrators and Faculty:** In surveys conducted in 2013 and 2012, 95% of college presidents and 94% of college faculty indicated they oppose concealed carry on campus.¹⁷
- **College Students:** In a 2012 study of students, 79 percent said that they would not feel safe if concealed guns were allowed onto their campuses.¹⁸

❑ **Colleges and universities, which have traditionally prohibited guns on campus, are relatively safe from gun violence—but campus life is rife with other risk factors that make the presence of guns potentially dangerous.**

- **Campuses are Relatively Safe:** Among all violent crime against college students from 1995 through 2002, 93 percent of incidents took place off campus.¹⁹ With over 21 million students attending colleges and universities in 2013,²⁰ only eight gun homicides occurred on campuses.²¹
- **Heavy Alcohol and Drug use:** A Columbia University study found that half of U.S. college students binge drink or abuse illegal or prescription drugs, while nearly a quarter of college students suffer from substance abuse and dependence.²² Students who carried guns on campus “were more likely than students who did not do so to report drinking heavily and more frequently, driving while under the influence of alcohol, and vandalizing property.”²³ Alcohol leads to impaired judgment about whether to shoot a gun, as well as impaired aim when firing.²⁴
- **Mental health issues and suicide:** Nearly 1 out of 10 undergraduates reported “seriously considering attempting suicide” and 1.4% had attempted suicide in the past 12 months.²⁵ At



one large public university, 14% of undergraduates and 11% of graduate students screened positive for depression.²⁶

❑ **The gun lobby claims that guns on campus is a Second Amendment issue - but the Supreme Court of the United States disagrees.**

- Writing for the majority in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, Justice Scalia wrote that the Second Amendment right does not cast doubt on the validity of “laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools ...”²⁷

¹ National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action, “ALEC Task Force Adopts Model “Campus Personal Protection Act”, May 23, 2008, available at: <http://www.nraila.org/legislation/federal-legislation/2008/alec-task-force-adopts-model-campus-pe.aspx?s=campus+personal+protection+act&st=&ps=>

² Bills were introduced in the following states in 2015: AR, CO, FL, IN, MI, MT, NC, NV, OK, OR, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WI, WV, WY. In 2016: AK, AL, AZ, GA, IN, KY, LA, MI, MO, MS, NH, OK, SC, TN, VA, WA, WI, WV. In 2017: AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, IA, IN, KS, KY, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NM, OK, SC, TN, WV, WY. In 2018: CA, CO, IA, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, NC, NH, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, VA, WV.

³ **16 states and D.C. effectively prohibit the concealed carrying of guns on campus:** **California:** Cal Pen Code § 626.9(h) (2015 SB 707 removed the exception for concealed firearm permit holders at Cal Pen Code § 626.9(l)); **District of Columbia:** D.C. Code Ann. § 22-4502.01(b), (c); **Florida:** Fla. Stat. § 790.06(12); **Illinois:** 720 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/24-1(a)(4), (a)(9), (a)(10), (c)(1.5), (c)(4); **Louisiana:** La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 40:1379.3(N)(11), 14:95.2, 14:95.6; **Massachusetts:** Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 269, § 10(j); **Michigan:** Michigan statutory law restricts carrying only in dorms and university buildings. Mich. Comp. Laws § 28.425o(1)(h). Schools have uniformly acted to ban guns elsewhere on campus, with the exception of Michigan State University, where guns are not prohibited beyond dorms and university buildings; **Missouri:** Mo. Rev. Stat. § 571.107.1(10); **Nebraska:** Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 69-2441(1)(a), 28-1204.04(1); **Nevada:** Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 202.3673(3)(a), 202.265(1)(e); **New Jersey:** N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:39-5e; **New Mexico:** N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-7-2.4(A); **New York:** N.Y. Penal Law §§ 265.01(3), 265.01-a; **North Carolina:** N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-269.2(b), (i). After passage of 2013 legislation, some faculty members who reside on campus are permitted to carry; **North Dakota:** North Dakota N.D.C.C. § 62.1-02-05. **South Carolina:** S.C. Code Ann. § 16-23-420; **Wyoming:** Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 6-8-104(t). **In 22 states, colleges set their own firearm policy. Across these states, almost every school has chosen not to allow guns on campus:** **Alabama:** University of South Alabama, “Student Handbook 2012-2013,” available at <http://www.southalabama.edu/lowdown/pdf/lowdown.pdf>: “The possession or use of explosives, firearms, and or other dangerous weapons are prohibited”; **Alaska:** Regents’ Policy and University Regulation, R02.09.020, available at <http://www.alaska.edu/bor/policy-regulations/>: “Loaded or unloaded firearms may not be carried or stored on university property”; **Arizona:** Arizona Board of Regents, A.A.C. § R7-4-102(3): Unauthorized use, possession or storage of any weapon, explosive device or fireworks on the university campus or at a university-sponsored activity; **Delaware:** 14 Del. C. § 9004(b)(6); **Connecticut:** Southern Connecticut State University, “2012 Uniform Campus Crime and Fire Safety Report,” available at https://www.southernct.edu/universitypolice/uploads/textWidget/wysiwyg/documents/CleryReport_FINAL_WEB.pdf: “The University prohibits employees and students or their guests from possessing or storing firearms on campus”; **Delaware:** 14 Del. C. § 9004(b)(6); **Hawaii:** The University of Hawaii at Manoa, “Campus Annual Crime Report 2010,” available at <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/housing/guide/reshallpolicies>: “The possession of illegal and dangerous weapons [including firearms] on University premises is strictly prohibited”; **Iowa:** Regulations written by the Regents Board, codified at 681 IAC § 9.1(2)(g), bars “use or possession on the campus or at or during any university-authorized function or event of firearms...”; **Indiana:** Indiana University, “Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct,” available at <http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/personal/index.shtml>: “[P]ossession or display of any firearm on university property” is prohibited; **Kentucky:** KRS § 237.115(1). Pursuant to a 2012 Kentucky Supreme Court decision, universities may not ban firearms in vehicles. *Mitchell v. University of Kentucky*, 366 S.W.3d 895 (Ky. 2012); **Maine:** 20-A M.R.S. § 10009; **Maryland:** University of Maryland, Policies and Procedures Section XI – 2.00(A)(1), available at <http://cf.umaryland.edu/umpolicies/usmpolicyInfo.cfm?polid=368>: “The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) prohibits the carrying of guns, firearms, ammunition, other weapons, or replicas of weapons at the UMB campus”; **Montana:** The state constitution provides that the Board of Regents has “full power, responsibility, and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and control” the school system. *Mont. Const., Art. X § 9*. Governor Steve Bullock and counsel for the state Legislative Services Division have both opined that this provision enables schools to regulate firearms, and prevents the legislature from limiting that authority; **New Hampshire:** University of New Hampshire Administrative Policies IIIJ, available at <http://www.usnh.edu/olpm/UNH/III.Admin/J.htm>: “The use and possession of all firearms...are prohibited on the Durham and Manchester core campuses of the University of New Hampshire”; **Ohio:** ORC Ann. § 2923.126(B)(5); **Oklahoma:** Oklahoma law bars permit holders from carrying on campus unless school policy provides to the contrary. 21 Okl. St. § 1277(D); **Pennsylvania:** Penn State Policy SY12, available at <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/sy12.html>: “The possession, carrying, or use of any weapon, ammunition, or explosive by any person is prohibited on all University property except by authorized law



enforcement officers and other persons specifically authorized by the University”; **Rhode Island**: University of Rhode Island, “The University of Rhode Island 2012-2014 Student Handbook,” available at http://www.uri.edu/judicial/assets/URI_Student_Handbook_2012-2014.pdf: “On-campus possession of firearms...is prohibited”; **South Dakota**: South Dakota Board of Regents Policy Manual, Student Conduct Code 3:4(2)(B)(19), available at http://www.sdbor.edu/policy/3-student_affairs/documents/3-4.pdf: “Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms” is prohibited; **Vermont**: University of Vermont Policy V. 4.1.6.2, available at http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/firearms.pdf: “The possession of firearms...is prohibited on UVM property and facilities”; **Virginia**: The state Supreme Court has ruled that public schools are authorized by state law to prohibit carrying on university property in buildings and at events. The court also ruled that university regulation of firearms is not prohibited by either the state or federal constitution. *DiGiacinto v. The Rector and Visitors of George Mason University*, 281 Va. 127 (Va. 2011). The state Attorney General has opined that state law also allows schools to regulate carrying generally by students and employees. 2006 Va. AG LEXIS 3; **Washington**: Pursuant to Rev. Code Wash. § 28B.20.130, Washington schools have written regulations prohibiting firearms. See WAC §§ 106-120-027, 478-124-020.; **West Virginia**: W. Va. Code § 61-7-14 authorizes any entity that controls real property to prohibit carry.

⁴ **Colorado**: *Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, LLC v. Regents of the Univ. of Colo.*, 2012 CO 17 (Co.); **Utah**: Utah Code Ann. §§ 53-5a-102(4), 53B-3-103;

⁵ In Arkansas, Idaho and Mississippi, only people with “enhanced” carry permits may carry guns on campus. **Arkansas**: 2017 HB 1249; **Idaho**: 2014 SB 1254; **Mississippi**: 2011 Miss. ALS 338, codified at Miss. Code Ann. §§ 45-9-101(13), 97-37-7(2). Colleges and universities in Oregon and Wisconsin must allow guns on campus but prohibit them in university buildings. **Oregon**: *Oregon Firearms Educational Foundation v. Board of Higher Education et al.*, 245 Ore. App. 713 (2011), Or. Rev. Stat. § 351.060; **Wisconsin**: Wis. Stat. §§ 943.13(1m)(c), (bm)(2)(am), Wis. Adm. Code UWS 18.10. **Texas**: In Texas, university presidents may establish reasonable rules regarding the carrying of concealed handguns by permit holders, as long as the rules don’t generally prohibit permit holders from carrying concealed handguns on the campus. Texas Gov’t Code § 411.2031(d-1). **Minnesota**: In Minnesota, colleges and universities must allow guns on campus but may prohibit students and employees from carrying on campus. Minn. Stat. § 624.714 Subd. 18. **Tennessee**: In Tennessee, colleges and universities must allow full-time employees to carry guns on the campus where they work. Colleges and universities are allowed to prohibit full-time employees from carrying guns in certain specified buildings and areas on campus. 2016 S.B. 2376, codified at §§ 39-17-1309 (11) – (13). **Georgia**: In Georgia, public colleges must generally allow concealed guns on campus if they are carried by permit holders, but guns are not allowed to be carried in student housing (including fraternity and sorority houses), sporting events, preschool or child care facilities, at classes of certain specialized schools, in classes in which dually enrolled high school students are present, at faculty, staff, or administrative offices, or at disciplinary hearings. 2017 GA HB 280, codified at O.C.G.A. § 16-11.127.1 **Kansas**: In Kansas, a 2013 law (2013 Kan. ALS 105) allows people to carry guns on public campuses, but allowed schools to opt out of those provisions for a maximum of four years. All public universities did so, but effective July 1, 2017, opting out will only be possible if the schools set up rigorous security measures. Kansas is also the only state where a permit is not required to carry a concealed handgun on campus. K.S.A. § 75-7c10(a)(11).

⁶ The Trace, Maura Ewing, “New Campus Gun Laws Have Schools Shopping For Metal Detectors. For Big Schools, the Costs are Eye-Popping,” April 25, 2017, available at: <https://www.thetrace.org/2017/04/campus-carry-gun-laws-university-cost/>.

⁷ Campus Safety Magazine, “Concealed Carry Law Costs Idaho Colleges \$3.7M”, February 5, 2015, available at: http://www.campussafetymagazine.com/article/conceal_carry_law_costs_idaho_colleges_3.7m/Metal_Detection.

⁸ Arizona Republic, Anne Ryman, “Gun bill costly, universities say,” March 1, 2012, available at: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/USCP/PNI/Valley%20&%20State/2012-03-01-pni0301met-guns-on-campus-costPNIBrd_ST_U.htm.

⁹ Texas Tribune, Christopher Smith Gonzalez, “Guns on Campus Could Cost Colleges,” April 27, 2011, available at: <http://www.texastribune.org/2011/04/27/guns-on-campus-could-cost-colleges/>.

¹⁰ Texas Tribune, Matthew Watkins, “Three UT Professors Sue to Block Campus Carry Law”, July 6, 2016, available at: <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/07/06/3-ut-austin-professors-sue-state-over-campus-carry/>; LA Times, Molly Hennessy-Fiske, “New Law Allowing Concealed Guns on Campus Roils University of Texas”, March 24, 2016, available at: <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-texas-campus-carry-20160324-story.html>.

¹¹ Associated Press, “Idaho State University Teacher Accidentally Shoots Self in Class”, Sept. 4, 2014, available at: <http://every.tw/188INQu>.

¹² Associated Press, “Webster State Student Accidentally Shoots Himself”, Jan 5, 2012, available at: http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/weber-state-student-accidentally-shoots-himself/article_eef6a77c-37d6-11e1-860e-0019bb2963f4.html.

¹³ The Dallas Morning News, Claire Z. Cardona, “Tarleton State Student Accidentally Fires Gun in Campus Dorm,” Sept. 15, 2017, available at: <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/higher-education/2016/09/15/tarleton-state-student-accidentally-discharges-gun-campus-dorm>.



¹⁴ The Salt Lake Tribune, Luke Ramseth, "UVU Student Accidentally Discharges Firearm Near Campus Restaurants; No One Injured," April 25, 2017, available at: <http://www.sltrib.com/news/5217524-155/uvu-student-accidentally-discharges-firearm-near>.

¹⁵ BuzzFeed News, Ema O'Connor, "Texas HBCU Students Worry More About Police Now That Guns Are Allowed On Campus," Sept. 1, 2016, available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/emaconnor/texas-hbcu-students-worry-about-campus-carry?utm_term=.aodWOVv4K#.avB9lmK3w; BuzzFeed News, Ema O'Connor, "Texas LGBT Students Say They Don't Feel Safe Now That People Can Carry Guns on Campus," Aug. 29, 2016, available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/emaconnor/texas-lgbt-students-say-they-dont-feel-safe-now-that-people?utm_term=.lwVYE93vK#.adm5kIVG; New York Times "University of Texas Students Find the Absurd in New Gun Law", Aug. 24, 2016, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/25/us/university-of-texas-students-find-the-absurd-in-a-new-gun-law.html?_r=0.

¹⁶ Thompson, Amy, et al. "Reducing firearm-related violence on college campuses—Police chiefs' perceptions and practices." *Journal of American College Health* 58.3 (2009): 247-254.

¹⁷ Price, James H., et al. "University Presidents' Perceptions and Practice Regarding the Carrying of Concealed Handguns on College Campuses." *Journal of American College Health* 62.7 (2014): 461-469; Thompson, Amy, et al. "Faculty perceptions and practices regarding carrying concealed handguns on university campuses." *Journal of community health* 38.2 (2013): 366-373.

¹⁸ Thompson, Amy, et al. "Student perceptions and practices regarding carrying concealed handguns on university campuses." *Journal of American college health* 61.5 (2013): 243-253.

¹⁹ Carr, Joetta L. "Campus violence white paper." *Journal of American College Health* 55.5 (2007): 304-319, available at: <http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/white-paper.pdf>

²⁰ Estimated figure. National Center for Education Statistics, "Projections of Education Statistics to 2021," Table 20, January 2013, available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2021/tables/table_20.asp

²¹ Everytown for Gun Safety, *Analysis of School Shootings*, December 2015, available at: <http://every.tw/2dhsOzq>.

²² Casa, N. C. "Wasting the best and the brightest: Substance abuse at America's colleges and universities." *New York (US): Columbia University-National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse* (2007).

²³ Miller, Matthew, David Hemenway, and Henry Wechsler. "Guns and gun threats at college." *Journal of American College Health* 51.2 (2002): 57-65.

²⁴ Wintemute, G. J. (2011). Association between firearm ownership, firearm-related risk and risk reduction behaviours and alcohol-related risk behaviours. *Injury Prevention*, 17(6), 422-427. doi:10.1136/ip.2010.031443

²⁵ ACHA. National College Health Assessment: Spring 2015 Reference Group Executive Summary. American College Health Association;2015.

²⁶ Kawa I, Carter JD, Joyce PR, et al. Gender differences in bipolar disorder: age of onset, course, comorbidity, and symptom presentation. *Bipolar disorders*. 2005;7(2):119-125; Eisenberg D, Gollust SE, Golberstein E, Hefner JL. Prevalence and correlates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality among university students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 2007;77(4):534-542.

²⁷ *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 627 (2008).