

2015-2016 Graduate Student Senate

Official Opinion on Senate Bill 11: Campus Carry

On behalf of the majority opinion voiced by graduate students attending and working for Texas Christian University, the 2015-2016 Graduate Student Senate Executive Board opposes the Texas Legislature Senate Bill 11 to authorize concealed handgun license owners to carry a gun on college and university campuses in the state of Texas.

The overwhelming number of opinions reported in general assembly and delivered to the Senate through written correspondence demonstrate an almost unanimous opposition to this legislation--with the majority of those reporting expressing grave concern for the effects of campus carry on graduate and undergraduate student learning environments. Namely, opting in to this provision poses concerns including but not limited to the following:

- 1) free and open class discussions and speech might be compromised due to the presence or possibility of guns being concealed within the learning environment,
- 2) the cognitive development of students below the age of 25 makes this population more susceptible to hasty and/ or unmeditated reaction to challenging events and scenarios,
- 3) the fair and accurate assessment of student achievement might be compromised when guns are present or suspected to be in student possession,
- 4) the reality of "brain drain" or "intellectual flight," i.e. the departure of talented academics at the faculty, staff, and graduate student level as a result of this legislation being passed,
- 5) the lack of knowledge on the part of student, faculty, and staff populations to respond to intruders in an appropriate manner, i.e. Violent Intrude Resistance Training (VIRT) and other educational support systems have not been made available to our population or the undergraduate population we teach at this time,
- 6) the barriers we build with other institutions and outside speakers and figures wanting to collaborate with our student and faculty populations, but hesitant to do so with knowledge of campus carry at TCU,
- 7) the increased possibility of other violent crimes occurring in our campus community as a result of guns being carried on our campus,
- 8) the reality that concealed handgun holders do not possess the same training and/ or professional experience as registered Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, who are trained to control and return to order violent weapons situations that have escalated by identifying who armed intruders are but who are not able to do so when bystanders are armed as well.

These opinions were presented by graduate students from a range of disciplines and programs, from experts already holding advanced degrees in TCU's College of Education and retired military professionals and disabled veterans in the Neeley School of Business. We trust that the Chancellor and the Board will heed these opinions with special care and good will so that all graduate students might continue to thrive at Texas Christian University as advanced-degree-seeking students as well as instructors, teaching assistants, research assistants, and staff members.

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