

### **More Guns on Campus = More Crime on Campus**

- College campuses are safer than the communities that surround them. 93% of the violence against students occurs off campus. One reason? Colleges and universities have tightly controlled firearms.
- For the nearly 18 million college students in America, the odds of being murdered on a college campus are extremely low. From 2001 to 2005, 43 college students were murdered, fewer than 10 per year.
- Nearly 18 million students, more than 4,000 campuses, over 5 years – 43 campus homicides. In 2005 alone, there were 49 homicides in Baton Rouge.
- A 2005 study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, found that workplaces where guns were permitted were 5 to 7 times more likely to be the site of a workplace homicide, compared to workplaces where guns were prohibited.
- A 1991 report by the General Accounting Office that surveyed unintentional firearm fatalities found that 23% of those deaths occurred because the person firing the gun was unaware whether the gun was loaded.
- Evidence also indicates that the presence of concealed weapons on campus would increase the likelihood of any student disagreement (i.e. parking lot arguments, fights at sporting events, etc.) escalating to violent or even deadly conflicts.

### **Guns on Campus Increase the Risk and Severity of Campus Violence**

The traditional college-age years are among the most volatile times in a person's life. College students face severe social and academic pressure, and arming them with guns is simply a dangerous idea.

- Alcohol – Alcohol use greatly increases the risk of injury to both the user and those around him. Heavy drinking is more common among 18-to-24 year-olds than any other age group. Alcohol is involved in 2/3 of college suicides, in 90% of campus rapes, and in 95% of violent crimes on campus. If guns are readily accessible, these assaults are much more likely to be fatal. Guns and alcohol are an extremely dangerous combination.
- Suicide and Mental Illness – Mental health issues and the risks of suicide among college students are another prime reason to limit campus access to guns by college students. Researchers have found that youths aged 18 to 25 experience the highest rate of mental health problems. Introducing firearms into this psychological cauldron could dramatically increase the danger to students on campus.
- Gun Theft – Increasing gun ownership among college students is likely to provide a prime, tempting target to gun thieves. The U.S. Justice Department has found that 10% of prison inmates incarcerated on gun-related charges obtained their firearm through theft. Most stolen guns are taken from homes or parked cars. These targets are relatively secure when compared to backpacks, cafeterias or lockers. Once a gun is stolen, it is much more likely to be used in a crime, and that not only endangers students on and off campus, but also increases the potential for danger to surrounding communities.

## **Precedent**

Louisiana Revised Statute 40:1379.3 (N) prohibits concealed weapons at schools, airports, parades, public meetings, polling places, churches, **the state capitol**, among others. **Is it less important to protect college students on campus than legislators in the state capitol?**

## **This Type of Legislation is Being Rejected Across the Country**

- All but 2 states in the nation have some sort of concealed weapons law
- 38 states ban firearms on school grounds, 11 leave the decision up to campuses, and no university in those 11 states allows concealed weapons.
- Only Utah allows concealed weapons onto college campuses, with certain restrictions.
- Last year, lawmakers in 17 states debated whether to allow people who have concealed weapons permits to bring their guns into classrooms. Most of the bills died without leaving committee. This type of legislation has been rejected in Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Washington. **Even Virginia, home state of the worst college shooting tragedy in history, rejected similar legislation.**
- This year, lawmakers in 12 states have filed legislation to allow for concealed weapons on campuses; 5 states have seen the legislation defeated in committee; the bill is dormant since being filed in 6 states and only shows movement in Tennessee and Texas.
- Maryland and Maine have considered legislation that will either prohibit concealed weapons or authorize their colleges and universities to regulate possession of firearms on their campuses.

## **More Guns on Campus on Campus Endangers Children and Private Business**

### **Employees**

- Louisiana's college campuses are home to childcare facilities, elementary and secondary lab schools, and hundreds of enrichment camps for children.
- Our colleges accept thousands of high school students in dual enrollment courses.
- A typical campus hosts dozens of private businesses, including bookstores, restaurants, and banks.
- Concealed weapons on campus would not only compromise the safety of college students and faculty, but it would also put at risk untold numbers of children and others not directly under the purview of the institution.

## **Putting Guns in College Classrooms is Opposed by Professionals**

Organizations which have gone on record as opposing concealed weapons on college campuses include:

- American Council on Education
- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Association of Universities
- American Association of State College and Universities
- National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges

- American Council on Education
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Brotherhood of Police Officers
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

## **ARGUMENTS**

### **SELF-PROTECTION**

**PRO:** current gun regulations limit bystanders' options to protect themselves in the event of a future attack. In recent instances of gun violence, police charged with protecting the campus could not arrive soon enough to stop the massacres.

**CON:** Police are extensively trained to deal with crises, students or university staff with concealed weapons permits are not trained or integrated into campus security plans.

Even with the best of intentions, armed students or employees could escalate an already explosive situation further, accidentally cause harm or use a gun in a situation that is not warranted.

Police could mistake the attacker for an armed student or employee (or vice versa) during a situation in which failure to make quick, discernable judgments can be extraordinarily costly for all parties involved.

**FACT:** The number of crime victims who successfully use firearms to defend themselves is quite small. According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reports and the Centers for Disease Control, out of 29,569 Americans who died by gunfire in 2004, only 229 were shot in justifiable homicides by private citizens with firearms (that is 0.7%)

### **DETERENT TO CRIME**

**PRO:** Carrying concealed weapons could potentially deter campus attacks and lessen campus crime. Current regulations restricting firearms on campus have not deterred recent attacks, and some gun-rights advocates believe that would-be attackers might reconsider their actions if they knew students or faculty were allowed to possess weapons.

**CON:** "Statistical evidence that these laws have reduced crime is limited, sporadic and extraordinarily fragile. If anything, there is stronger evidence for the conclusion that these laws increase crime than there is for the conclusion that they decrease it." (*Ian Ayres of Yale Law School and John J. Donohue III of Stanford Law School*)

Opponents of the argument believe changes in weapons laws will not prevent people with mental disorders from proceeding with violent plans "Most mass shooters are suicidal; they intended to die. Armed confrontation is not a deterrent, it is the point." (*Josh Horwitz of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence*)

**FACT:** Between 1992 and 1998, the violent crime rate in states which kept strict concealed weapons laws fell by an average of 30%. The violent crime rate for the states that had weak concealed weapons laws during this same time saw their violent crime rates drop by only 15%. Nationally, violent crime declined by 25% during that same period. These numbers indicate that states with stricter laws have

found more effective ways to reduce their crime rates than simply letting more people carry hidden handguns

### **SAFETY RISKS**

Nearly half of America's full-time college students abuse drugs or binge drink at least once a month.

For college gun owners, the rate of binge-drinking is even higher — two-thirds.

Plus, college gun owners are more likely than the average student to:

- Engage in binge drinking,
- Need an alcoholic drink first thing in the morning,
- Use cocaine or crack,
- Be arrested for a DUI,
- Vandalize property, and
- Get in trouble with police.

The presence of firearms could lead to conflicts between roommates, classmates and others on campus, escalating to the point where one or more individuals could be injured or killed as a result of gun violence.

The presence of these weapons may also invite gun theft; resulting in potential misuse and exacerbating the likelihood that physical harm would ensue.

**FACT:** Firearms are the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle accidents) for young people ages 1-19 in the U.S.

In 2005 4,198 youth aged 20 to 24 died as the result of firearms: 2,757 were homicides, 59 were legal interventions 1,224 suicides, 203 were either unintentional or undetermined.

### **STUDENT SUICIDE:**

According to the Suicide Prevention Network, suicide is the second leading cause of death for American college students, and thousands more attempt suicide and do not succeed.

Easy access to firearms on campus would likely worsen this serious problem.

Studies show that having firearms in the household correlates with a greater risk of successful suicide.

Allowing access to firearms in student residence halls and on-campus apartments would provide an efficient and convenient method of suicide during a momentary mental health crisis, and thus increase the likelihood of additional human tragedy.

**FACT:** About 1,100 college students commit suicide every year, but another 24,000 students attempt to do so.

When guns are used in a suicide attempt, more than 90% of the time it is fatal, compared to a 3% fatality rate for suicide attempts by drug overdose.

## **LIABILITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS**

Colleges are expected to provide a reasonable level of safety to students, faculty and staff. Liberalizing gun laws deprives colleges of the discretion to set restrictions concerning firearms, thus exposing them to potential liability without the means to establish sensible policies to reduce risks.

Administrative costs may bring an additional financial burden to campus police. If firearms are allowed on campus, police may need to investigate firearm incidents and firearm theft, as well as regulate age requirements.

This could be a sizable and unnecessary distraction for campus law enforcement personnel, with the associated costs adding to already reduced budgets faced by departments and universities.

## **INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY**

State constitution grants administrative autonomy to system governing boards. Stripping them of the ability to regulate guns on campus could be construed as an unconstitutional infringement on this autonomy.

Private colleges also have private property rights. Legislation either barring or mandating an allowance for concealed weapons on private college campuses could be construed as an intrusion on private property rights.

## **Other States**

Currently, nearly all public colleges and universities ban student possession of concealed weapons on campus through state laws, university regulations or both.

In approximately 26 states, state law prohibits guns on public college campuses, even for people that have obtained concealed weapons licenses, with the exception of university public safety officers.

Only one state, Utah, prohibits its state institutions from barring guns on campus.

Twenty-three (23) states allow public campuses or state systems to determine their own weapons policies, with nearly all choosing to be “gun-free.” (Colorado State University is an exception, but the campus still retains some restrictions.)

Some states do not address guns on campus in state law, but because they seldom issue concealed-weapons permits, university-imposed regulations are a non-issue.

In all, 17 states attempted major reforms to campus weapon laws in 2008: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Washington. **ALL FAILED.**

## **2009 actions**

Legislation has been filed in 12 states: Arizona, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. It has been defeated in 5 of those states: Alabama, Arkansas, North Dakota, South Dakota and Virginia.

Maryland and Maine have pending legislation that would either prohibit concealed weapons on campus or authorize the campus to regulate weapons on campus.

## **2009**

### **Dormant since filed in January and February**

Arizona (HB2607) **pending committee referral**

Indiana (SB 12) **pending Senate Judiciary hearing**

Missouri (HB645) referred to House Agri-Business- **no hearing scheduled**

Oklahoma (H 1083): **referred to House Public Safety- dormant, Senate Appropriation- Education Subcommittee- dormant**

South Carolina (SB347) (*campus parking lots only*) **referred to Senate Judiciary**

### **Active Bills**

Maine (LD520) (*authorizes colleges and universities to regulate the possession of firearms on their campuses*) **passed House Floor**

(HP365) referred to Senate Education- **ordered concurrence**

Tennessee (H 521) **referred to House Judiciary**

(SB245) **referred to Senate Judiciary**

(HB798 & 823) (*authorizes faculty and staff and military and law enforcement to carry concealed weapons on campus*) **failed in House Judiciary subcommittee- pending hearing in Senate judiciary**

Texas (HB1893) **passed House Public Safety by substitute; pending House Floor (with 70 co-authors)**

(SB1164) **referred to Senate State Affairs**

### **Defeated/Tabled this Year:**

Alabama (HB 362) (*parking lots only*) **assigned to House Commerce**

(SB 407) **assigned to Senate Judiciary**

Arkansas (HB 1097) (*campus parking lots only*)- **pending in House Judiciary- deferred**

*University of Louisiana System*  
*Talking Points/House Bill 27*  
*May 2009*

Maryland (SB551) (*prohibits the carrying or possession of firearms, on public campuses*) **reported unfavorably by Senate Judiciary**  
(HB353) **reported unfavorably House Judiciary**

North Dakota (HB 1348) (*limits possession to dwellings and vehicles excludes dorm rooms??*) **narrowly passed the House; narrowly failed in the Senate**

South Dakota (H 1257) **House Education deferred and Senate Committee- failed**

Virginia (HB 1656) **referred to Committee on Militia and Public Safety**

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**2008**

***States with Bills Defeated/Tabled (2008):***

Alabama (SB 18, SB 27, SB 271)  
Arizona (SB 1214)  
Georgia (HB 915)  
Idaho (SB 1381)  
Indiana (SB 65, SB 158, SB 356)  
Kentucky (HB 114)  
Louisiana (HB 199)  
Michigan (HB 4759)  
Mississippi (HB 1286)  
Minnesota (HF 4198, SF 3844)  
Ohio (HB 225)  
Oklahoma (HB 2513)  
South Carolina (HB 3964)  
South Dakota (HB 1261)  
Tennessee (HB 3014, SB 3730)  
Virginia (HB 424, HB 1371)  
Washington (SB 6860)

***States with Bills Signed By Governor (2008):***

none

**2007**

***States with Bills Tabled/ Failed due to Adjournment (2007):***

Alabama (SB 473)  
Arizona  
Maine (SB 317)  
Michigan (HB 4759)  
Nevada (SB 286)  
Ohio (HB 225)

South Carolina (HB 3964)

***States with Bills Signed By Governor (2007):***

none

**2004**

Allows Guns on Only Public Colleges/Universities:  
Utah (currently in effect)