



NDSA-16-2021

A Resolution in Opposition of HB 1311

WHEREAS, the North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) represents the voice of North Dakota's 45,000 public college and university students; and,

WHEREAS, the purpose of NDSA is to represent all students enrolled in the North Dakota University System (NDUS) and advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience; and,

WHEREAS, HB 1311¹, has been submitted to the North Dakota legislature; and,

WHEREAS, this bill would change section 62.1-02-05 to add an exemption to concealed carry in a public building or setting; and,

WHEREAS, this exception is for individuals with either a class 1 or 2 firearm license; and,

WHEREAS, the requirements for an individual to acquire a class 1 or 2 firearm license are outlined in section [62.1-04-03](#); and,

WHEREAS, a state institution of higher education would qualify as a public building, with areas outside of buildings on campuses as public spaces; and,

WHEREAS, this bill would allow any student, staff, or faculty who possesses a class 1 or class 2 firearm license to conceal carry firearms on state campuses; and,

WHEREAS, a study of 1,649 undergraduate students from 15 public midwestern universities found that "78% of students were not supportive of concealed handguns on campuses²;" and,

WHEREAS, in the same study, when students were asked how safe they would feel if faculty, staff, students, and visitors carried concealed handguns on campus, 77% responded either "very unsafe" or "somewhat unsafe," while only 3% said they would feel "much safer" and 18% responded "slightly safer;"

WHEREAS, in a study by John Hopkins University in 2016 found that, "Increasing gun availability in campus environments could make far more common acts of aggression, recklessness or self-harm more deadly and, thus, have a deleterious impact on the safety of students, faculty and staff"; and,

WHEREAS, mental health has become increasingly important on college campuses as college age groups struggle with depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide – problems that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic³, and immediate access to guns in one's residence

¹ <https://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/67-2021/documents/21-0967-01000.pdf>

² [10.1080/07448481.2013.799478](https://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/67-2021/documents/21-0967-01000.pdf)

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/09/11/students-great-need-mental-health-support-during-pandemic>



has been linked to increases in suicides⁴, thus access to firearms on campus and in dorms could lead to increases in completed student suicides; and,

WHEREAS, the permissance of concealed carry on college campuses would change the job of on-campus security and police forces, which vary widely by NDUS institution in terms of staffing, procedures, and their own ability to carry a firearm; and,

WHEREAS, HB 1311 would necessitate changes to institutional on-campus security and police forces that would incur additional security costs related to training, staffing, equipment, etc.; and,

WHEREAS, the NDSA recognizes that campuses in the NDUS are incredibly diverse and may have different needs and beliefs relating to concealed carry; and,

WHEREAS, changes to campus policies that affect the rights of students should be formulated with student input and be decided on a campus by campus basis; and,

WHEREAS, some NDUS institutions across the state ensure options for students to store their firearms and ammunition in a secure location on campus; and,

WHEREAS, the NDSA fully supports the right of students, faculty, and staff to own a firearm for use off campus; so,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the North Dakota Student Association opposes HB 1311 and all other legislation that would change Section 62.1-01-05 in ways that would require institutions to allow firearms on campuses without the input of students, faculty, staff, administration, security, and other institutional stakeholders on an institutional case-by-case basis.

Approved by the NDSA General Assembly on Saturday, February 20th, 2021.

⁴ <https://doi.org/0.7326/M13-1301>