



NDSA-21-2425

## **A Resolution in Opposition to HB 1588: Allowing the Possession of Firearms and Dangerous Weapons in Publicly Owned Spaces and Institutions of Higher Education**

**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**, during the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session legislators have proposed HB 1588, which would remove the prohibition of allowing firearms in publicly owned spaces including college environments, while allowing cities, counties, and townships the authority to regulate firearms in publicly owned spaces; and,

**WHEREAS**, this bill does not allow institutions of Higher Education the authority to regulate firearms and dangerous weapons in their spaces, as they are considered public spaces, and if passed, this bill would jeopardize student safety and wellbeing on college campuses; and,

**WHEREAS**, historically, the NDSA has opposed legislation that would change firearm regulations on college campuses, and during the 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session the NDSA passed [NDSA-16-2021](#), which opposes concealed open and closed carry on college campuses; and,

**WHEREAS**, during the last academic year, in response to legislation that was proposed during the 68<sup>th</sup> Legislative, the NDSA passed [NDSA-12-2324](#), which is a resolution in opposition to open and concealed gun carry on NDUS college campuses, opposing all legislation that would change Section 62.1. of the North Dakota Century Code to allow firearms on campuses, whether concealed or open carry; and,

**WHEREAS**, according to the North Dakota Behavioral Health Data Book in 2023, 153 North Dakotans died of suicide in 2021, an increase from 2019, where 134 suicides were reported; and,<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, of those who committed suicide in 2021, 80 percent of them were male, and 20 percent were female, with 61 percent of those who committed suicide being between the ages of 20 and 49, which includes the college demographic; and,

**WHEREAS**, according to an article by Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) in 2023 the suicide rate in North Dakota was 20.3 per 100,000 people while the national average was 14.1. The article also states that suicides by firearms were 13.3 per 100,000 while the national average was 7.5; and,<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, further into the North Dakota Behavioral Data Book, it indicates that among adults, there were approximately 41,000 North Dakota adults that had serious mental illnesses in the prior year, and 7.06 percent of adults reported that they had a serious mental health illness in

<sup>1</sup>[2023DataBook March FirstHalf\\_lowres](#)

the prior year; and,

**WHEREAS**, many students experience also mental health issues, and some students experience suicidal ideation, and may attempt suicide; and,

**WHEREAS**, most of the time, those who attempt suicide use non-lethal and are unsuccessful, however, allowing firearms on college campuses could allow a means under which these students could attempt lethal means of suicide, even if they do not own the firearm that they use; and,

**WHEREAS**, in a situation where a student is dissatisfied with an academic outcome with a course, and are engaged in an argument with a faculty member over this outcome, this situation could be highly escalated if the student possesses a concealed firearm, causing faculty members to be concerned about their safety; so,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the NDSA opposes HB 1588 as it negatively impacts student, faculty and staff safety and wellbeing at institutions of higher education; and,

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the NDSA opposes any further legislation that would jeopardize the safety of students, faculty and staff, such as other legislation that would allow firearms on college campuses.

*Approved by the North Dakota Student Association General Assembly  
Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025*