

passed by roll call vote
10/12/10 25 FOR

AR 23: In Support of the Existing Handgun Ban on Texas College Campuses

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WHEREAS, Texas law does not at present allow any weapons in campus buildings except in the possession of on-duty law enforcement officials; and the possession of a weapon in a Texas educational institution has for some time been a third-degree felony;ⁱ and,

WHEREAS, Every major university system in the state, and most private universities, employ police officers for public safety, all of whom are both better equipped and better trained to protect the UT community than private citizens; and,

WHEREAS, Campus police are trained to respond quickly to active shooter situations by neutralizing the shooter without providing warnings, a tactic which enables police to enter crime scenes more quickly;ⁱⁱ further, this tactic prevented a number of the nineteen survivors of the Virginia Tech shooting from bleeding to death before help arrived;ⁱⁱⁱ and,

WHEREAS, In accordance with comparatively stricter weapons regulations, the per-capita rates of murders and aggravated assault for The University of Texas at Austin (2000 – July 2008) are significantly lower than for the City of Austin (2000 - 2007);^{iv} and these low violent crime rates are reflected at other universities;^v and,

WHEREAS, 93% of violent crimes against students are committed off-campus;^{vi} and,

WHEREAS, Suicide is a greater problem for college students than other demographics in the United States: it is the second-leading cause of death among college students (ninth-leading cause of death among the entire U.S. population);^{vii} moreover, suicides attempted using guns are fatal between 82% and 91% of the time, more than any other method;^{viii} and finally, greater than half of all annual firearms deaths in Texas and nationwide are suicides;^{ix,x} and,

WHEREAS, Proponents of "concealed carry on campus" argue that arming students and teachers would deter attacks like those at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University; however, both cases were murder-suicides, suggesting that deterrence is unlikely to play a role in prevention;^{xi} and,

WHEREAS, Mass murder on college campuses is extraordinarily rare;^{xii} and,

WHEREAS, The authors of the concealed carry legislation in the previous session cited "preventing another Virginia Tech" as a rationale; however, The Virginia Tech Review Panel, a bipartisan group appointed to investigate the tragedy at Virginia Tech, specifically recommended a firearms ban on college campuses; furthermore, no survivors of the Virginia Tech shooting are in favor of concealed carry on campus;^{xiii} and,

WHEREAS, University police and administrators, including the President Powers of UT-Austin and the Chancellor Cigerroa of The University of Texas System, have stated opposition to relaxing the campus handgun ban; and,

WHEREAS, Members of university and college communities in Texas conclusively spoke out against permitting firearms on campuses in the 81st Session of the Texas Legislature;^{xiv} therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin shall call upon state legislators to oppose any attempt to weaken the current weapons ban in educational facilities and institutions in Texas; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That official copies of this resolution be delivered to the members of the Texas Legislature; the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Office of the Governor; the Office of the Vice President for ~~Governmental Relations and Office of the President of The University of Texas at Austin~~; the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations, the Office of the Board of Regents, and the Office of the Chancellor of The University of Texas System.

i "Weapons on Campus, University of Texas at Austin Police Department (UTPD)"
<<http://www.utexas.edu/police/prevention/weapons.html>>

ii Personal communication with chiefs of police at Southwestern University and The University of Texas at Austin, as well as with a first-responder of Virginia Tech Police Department by way of Colin Goddard (a survivor of the Virginia Tech shooting).

iii Personal communication, Colin Goddard.

iv UTPD statistics are available at <<http://www.utexas.edu/police/reports/statistics/>>. City of Austin statistics are available at <<http://www.cityofaustin.org/police/censustract/censustract.cfm>>. The crime comparison was made on the basis of population and averaged over all years for which statistics were available. If calculated based on jurisdiction size (per square mile instead of per capita), the murder rate for UT (3 in 30 years with a population of around 60,000) is still well below that of the City of Austin.

v Henson, VA; Stone, WE. 1999. Campus crime: A victimization study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, pp 295-307.

vi Baum & Klaus. 2005. Violent Victimization of College Students, 1995-2002. U.S. Department of Justice.

vii "Teenage Suicide." National Alliance on Mental Illness. Accessed from
<http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Helpline1/Teenage_Suicide.htm> on 3/1/10.

viii (a) Spicer & Miller. 2000. Suicide acts in 8 states: incidence and case fatality rates by demographics and method. *American Journal of Public Health* 90(12): 1885-1891.

(b) Miller, Azrael, & Hemenway. 2004. The epidemiology of case fatality rates for suicide in the northeast. *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 43(6): 723-30.

The 82% statistic comes from the first paper; the 91% comes from the second. These numbers agree well with studies from Canada and Australia, and do not vary when different U.S. states are sampled.

ix "Texas Suicide Prevention Factsheet." Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Accessed from
<http://www.sprc.org/stateinformation/PDF/statedatasheets/tx_datasheet.pdf> on 3/1/2010.

x "Suicide: Facts at a Glance." Center for Disease Control: Suicide Prevention. Accessed from
<<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide-DataSheet-a.pdf>> on 3/1/2010.

xi There are numerous examples of deranged gunmen attacking even clearly-armed police officers. For example, see:

Ratcliffe, Heather, "6 dead in shooting rampage at Kirkwood City Council," *St. Louis Today*, 27 March 2008.

Additionally, a number of these shootings have involved individuals licensed to carry concealed weapons:

<http://www.csgv.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=150:mass-shootings-by-concealed-handgun-permit-holders-in-2009&catid=47>.

xii A pair of videos available from UTPD at <<http://www.utexas.edu/police/shotsfired>> compare the probability of being involved in a school shooting to the probability of being struck by lightning.

xiii The exact wording is, "The panel recommends that guns be banned on campus grounds and in buildings unless mandated by law" (VI-5, p. 76). The full report is available at <<http://www.vtreviewpanel.org/>>.

xiv A partial list:

- The University of Texas at Austin: Student Government <utsg.org>, Graduate Student Assembly <utgsa.org>, Senate of College Councils, University Democrats, Faculty Council, Graduate Assembly (not the same as GSA)
- The University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council
- By referendum, the student body at Texas A&M University
- The student governments at University of Houston, University of North Texas, University of Texas at Brownsville and Southmost College, University of Texas – Pan American, and others

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- Texas Association of College and University Police Administrators <www.tacupa.tcu.edu/legis.htm>
 - Independent Colleges & Universities of Texas (ultimately, were exempted from the bill in exchange for remaining neutral), the lobbying association for private colleges
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