

**The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin**

Resolution: G.R. 16 (S) 1

Sponsors: Legislative Affairs Committee

Keeping UT Classrooms Gun-Free

Summary: A resolution expressing the position of the Graduate Student Assembly on Senate Bill 11 (S.B. 11), the “campus carry” law.

WHEREAS

(from the Final Report, Campus Carry Working Group)

Graduate students increasingly live, work, study, and learn in spaces that will be open to CHL holders under S.B. 11, if implemented as per the Campus Carry Working Group recommendations; and

WHEREAS

WHEREAS

1,787 UT graduate students to date have signed a public statement affirming their opposition to firearms in UT classrooms, who belong to 132 programs in 18 Colleges and Schools at UT and represent 15.8% of the university’s 11,331 graduate student population; and

WHEREAS

(from press release, UT Grad Students Oppose Campus Carry)

WHEREAS

The Campus Carry Working group found, "A very substantial majority of the comments [they] received from the University community expressed opposition to or serious misgivings about S.B. 11 and the implementation of campus carry," which is consistent with conversations shared with this body during assembly meetings and with comments received by our members; and

“Senate Bill 11, the “campus carry” law, was passed by the Texas Legislature and signed into law by Governor Abbott last spring and provides that, beginning August 1, 2016, a person who holds a license to carry may carry a handgun – concealed – both on the grounds and in the buildings of an institution of higher education”; and

We believe new university policies, whether produced internally or required by the state legislature, ought to have a demonstrated positive effect on educational

outcomes, and a review of the evidence cited by the Campus Carry Working

WHEREAS

Group in their report finds no positive effect, in fact their report recognizes that “allowing concealed handguns in classrooms may chill some class discussion and hinder the recruitment and retention of faculty and students”; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

We are eager to engage in a detailed conversation around the implementation of S.B.11 at UT in the future, we believe it is important to acknowledge a significant group of graduate students who are opposed to guns in academic classrooms in any and all circumstances; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The Graduate Student Assembly strongly opposes concealed handgun license (CHL) holders bringing concealed weapons into UT classrooms; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The Graduate Student Assembly considers S.B.11 an ideological bill that is an unnecessary intrusion into an educational environment that risks, in the words of Chancellor McRaven, stifling "the academic freedom and robust debate that is central to our mission of educating the young men and women of our state and conducting the research that changes lives and the world around us"; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The Graduate Student Assembly strongly encourages that President Gregory Fenves do everything in his power to prevent CHL holders from bringing concealed weapons into UT classrooms; and

This legislation be filed with the Office of the President, made available on the Graduate Student Assembly website, and be broadly distributed to graduate students and the UT community.