

**IACLEA Position Statement  
 Concealed Carrying of Firearms  
 Proposals on College Campuses  
 IACLEA President Lisa A. Sprague  
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The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, Inc., (IACLEA) has been asked by its Members to react to legislative initiatives in some states that would allow persons to carry concealed weapons on college and university campuses.

IACLEA's Board of Directors believes "concealed carry" initiatives do not make campuses safer. There is no credible evidence to suggest that the presence of students carrying concealed weapons would reduce violence on our college campuses.

- There is no credible statistical evidence demonstrating that laws allowing the carrying of concealed firearms reduce crime. In fact, the evidence suggests that permissive concealed carry laws generally will *increase* crime. Ian Ayres & John J. Donohue III, *Shooting Down the "More Guns, Less Crime" Hypothesis*, 55 Stan. L. Rev. 1193, 1285, 1296 (Apr. 2003); and Ian Ayres & John J. Donohue III, *The Latest Misfires in Support of the "More Guns, Less Crime" Hypothesis*, 55 Stan. L. Rev. 1371, 1397 (Apr. 2003).
- In an article published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Jon Vernick, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research in Baltimore, Maryland, was quoted as stating that "the best science that we have says concealed carry laws do not save lives, as the proponents contend." Jared Flesher & Alexandra Marks, *Should Students be Allowed to Carry Concealed Weapons?*, *Christian Sci. Monitor*, April 18, 2007, at 2.
- Use of a gun in self-defense appears to be a rare occurrence. For example, of the 30,694 Americans who died by gunfire in 2005, only 147 were killed by firearms in justifiable homicides by private citizens. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Dept. of Justice, *Crime in the United States, 2006, Expanded Homicide Data Table 14*, available at [http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/expanded\\_information/data/shrtable\\_14.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_14.html). (A "justifiable homicide" is defined by the FBI as the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen.)
- Public health researcher David Hemenway, reviewing significant research on the use of firearms in self-defense, also concludes that "[g]un use in self-defense is rare, and it appears that using a gun in self-defense is no more likely to reduce the chance of being injured during a crime than

various other forms of protective action," and notes that no "evidence seems to exist that gun use in self-defense reduces the risk of death." David Hemenway, *Private Guns, Public Health* 78 (2004).

- Several states prohibit the possession of handguns by any person under age 21, meaning only a small percentage of students in those states would be able to carry a concealable firearm for self-defense purposes on campus even if such a policy were adopted. See, e.g., Connecticut (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-36f); District of Columbia (D.C. Code Ann. § 7-2502.03(a)(1)); Hawaii (Haw. Rev. Stat. § 134-2(d)); Illinois (430 Ill. Comp. Stat. 65/4(a)(2)(i); 720 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/24-3.1); Iowa (Iowa Code § 724.22); Maryland (Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety § 5-133(d)); Massachusetts (Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, § 131); New Jersey (N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:58-6.1); New York (N.Y. Penal Law § 400.00(1)(a)); and South Carolina (S.C. Code Ann. § 16-23-30(B)).

IACLEA is concerned that concealed carry laws have the potential to dramatically increase violence on college and university campuses that our Members are empowered to protect. Among the concerns with concealed carry laws or policies are: the potential for accidental discharge or misuse of firearms at on-campus or off-campus parties where large numbers of students are gathered or at student gatherings where alcohol or drugs are being consumed, as well as the potential for guns to be used as a means to settle disputes between or among students. There is also a real concern that campus police officers responding to a situation involving an active shooter may not be able to distinguish between the shooter and others with firearms.

- Public safety is threatened by student gun owners. One study found that two-thirds of gun-owning college students engage in binge drinking. Gun-owning students are more likely than unarmed college students to drink "frequently and excessively" and then engage in risky activities, such as driving when under the influence of alcohol, vandalizing property, and getting into trouble with police. Matthew Miller, David Hemenway & Henry Wechsler, *Guns and Gun Threats at College*, 51 J. Am. C. Health 57, 63 (Sept. 2002).
- Another study similarly discovered that college student gun owners are more likely than those who do not own guns to engage in activities that put themselves and others at risk for severe or life-threatening injuries, including reckless behavior involving alcohol, driving while intoxicated, and suffering an alcohol-related injury. Matthew Miller, David Hemenway & Henry Wechsler, *Guns at College*, 48 J. Am. C. Health 7, 9 (1999).
- While a college dorm room is not necessarily the same as a home or apartment in all respects, a large body of research demonstrates that owning or possessing a gun in the home actually increases the risk of firearm-related death or injury to a household member rather than protect against intruders. See, for example:

- Linda L. Dahlberg et al., *Guns in the Home and Risk of a Violent Death in the Home: Findings from a National Study*, 160 Am. J. Epidemiology 929 (2004) (having a gun in the home is associated with an increased risk of firearm homicide and suicide in the home);
- Douglas J. Wiebe, *Homicide and Suicide Risks Associated with Firearms in the Home: A National Case-Control Study*, 41 Annals Emergency Med. 771 (June 2003) (finding that having a gun in the home increases the risk that adults will commit suicide with a firearm or be killed in a homicide with a firearm);
- Douglas J. Wiebe, *Firearms in U.S. Homes as a Risk Factor for Unintentional Gunshot Fatality*, 35 Accident Analysis & Prevention 711 (2003) (finding the relative risk of dying from an unintentional gunshot injury to be 3.7 times higher for adults living in homes with guns); and
- Matthew Miller, David Hemenway, and Deborah Azrael, *State-level Homicide Victimization Rates in the U.S. in Relation to Survey Measures of Household Firearm Ownership, 2001 -2003*, 64 Soc. Sci. & Med. 656 (2007) (finding that states with higher rates of household firearm ownership had significantly higher homicide victimization rates).

Despite recent high profile shootings on college campuses, the evidence shows that college campuses are safe environments for students.

- A recent U.S. Department of Justice study comparing the violent victimization of college students versus non-students, aged 18 to 24, from the period 1995 – 2002 found that students experience less violence annually than non-students. Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *National Crime Victimization Survey – Violent Victimization of College Students, 1995-2002* 1 (Jan. 2005), at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/vvcs02.pdf>.
- Approximately 9 out of 10 college students who were victims of violent crime were victimized off campus, rather than on campus. *Id.* at 5. Firearms were used in only 9% of all violent crimes against college students over this period. *Id.*
- Another study found that fewer than 2% of students reported being threatened with a gun while at college. Matthew Miller, David Hemenway & Henry Wechsler, *Guns and Gun Threats at College*, 51 J. Am. C. Health 57, 63 (Sept. 2002).

Suicides accounted for 55 percent of the nation's nearly 31,000 firearms deaths in 2005, the most recent year statistics are available from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-Based Injury Statistics Query & Reporting System (WISQARS), *WISQARS Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2005* (2008), at [http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10\\_sy.html](http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_sy.html).] Public Health researchers have concluded that in homes where guns are present, the likelihood that someone in the home will die from suicide or homicide is much greater.

We urge public policy makers to weigh heavily the concerns of IACLEA regarding the unintended consequences of any proposals to allow college students and any other persons to carry concealed weapons on campus. We believe that the research we have cited shows that these unintended consequences include:

1. Likely increase in reckless shooting incidents resulting in more injuries and deaths from firearms on campus;
2. Likely increase in both homicides and suicides;
3. Increased exposure of campus police to injuries;
4. Unfunded mandates resulting from policy changes, including resources necessary to investigate firearms incidents, thefts of firearms, and checking for underage/prohibited possessors;
5. Impact on university policies regarding employee concealed carry.

We are committed to working with public policy makers to enhance campus public safety. We are also working with other campus public safety stakeholders to provide and promote campus crime prevention training programs, as well as to develop strategies and programs to enhance emergency preparedness.