

2023 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

HB 1404

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1404
1/26/2023

Relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus, to the limitation on authority of a political subdivision regarding firearms, and to provide a penalty
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2:36 PM

Vice Chairman D Anderson opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman D. Anderson, Representatives Bosch, Conmy, Dockter, Hagert, Heinert, Ista, Marschall, Novak, Olson, Roers Jones, and Ruby. Absent: Representative Kasper

Discussion Topics:

- Campus carry
- Forms of protection
- Campus safety
- Campus crime
- Suicide rates
- GreenBandana Student Help Group

Rep. Matt Heilman, Dist 7, presented HB 1401, Testimony 17103
Lisa Johnson, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs of NDUS, oral testimony
Katie Fitsimmons, NDUS Director of Student Affairs, Testimony 20911, 21148
Doug Darling, President, Lake Region State College, oral testimony

Additional written testimony:

Matthew Simon, Testimony 17104
Jacqueline Beller, Treasurer, Moms Demand for Gun Safety, Testimony 17128
Christopher Scott, President, ND Student Association, Testimony 17129
Seth Lumley, Executive Commissioner of Legislative Affairs, for NDSU's Student Government, Testimony 17155
Iain Graeme, Rocky Mountain & Great Plains Region Director, Gun Owners of America, Testimony 17164
Craig Roe, ND CWL Instructor/BCI ND, FFL holder, Testimony 21131

3:13 Vice Chairman D Anderson closed the hearing.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1404
2/2/2023
Subcommittee

Relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus; relating to the limitation on authority of a political subdivision regarding firearms; and to provide a penalty.
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8:00 AM Chairman Heinert called the subcommittee meeting to order. Present were Chairman Heinert, Representatives Ista, Roers Jones. Absent: subcommittee member Rep Ruby.

Also present: Rep. Porter

Discussion topics:

- Gun bills

Chairman Heinert stated the 7 gun bills the subcommittee would be working on:

1. HB 1339
2. HB 1340
3. HB 1341
4. HB 1350
5. HB 1404
6. HB 1479
7. HB 1483

Claire Ness from the Attorney General's office will attend with information on a Supreme Court case next Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 8 AM. The subcommittee will also meet next Friday, February 10, 2023 at 8:00 AM.

8:04 AM Chairman Heinert closed the meeting.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1404

2/9/2023

Subcommittee

Relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus; relating to the limitation on authority of a political subdivision regarding firearms; and to provide a penalty.
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8:00 AM

Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Heinert, Representatives Ista, Roers Jones, and Ruby. Also present were Representatives D Anderson and Porter.

Discussion Topics:

- Reasoning by analogy
- Person's conduct
- 2nd amendment
- Dangerous and unusual weapons
- Proposed amendment 01001

Claire Ness, Chief Deputy Attorney General, ND Attorney General's Office, oral testimony on New York State Rifle & Pistol Association Inc. v. Bruen (Decided on June, 2022)

8:25 AM Chairman Heinert closed the meeting.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1404
2/10/2023
Subcommittee

Relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus; relating to the limitation on authority of a political subdivision regarding firearms; and to provide a penalty.
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8:00 AM

Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Heinert, Representatives Ruby, and Ista. Rep Roers Jones was absent.

Discussion Topics:

- Study

Chairman Heinert stated that the subcommittee recommend to the full committee a Do Not Pass on HB 1404.

8:45 AM Chairman Heinert closed the meeting.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1404
2/16/2023

Relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus, to the limitation on authority of a political subdivision regarding firearms, and to provide a penalty
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10:09 AM

Chairman Porter opened the meeting. Members present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman D. Anderson, Representatives Bosch, Conmy, Dockter, Hagert, Heinert, Ista, Kasper, Marschall, Novak, Olson, Roers Jones, and Ruby.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

Rep Heinert moved a Do Not Pass, seconded by Rep Roers Jones.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	AB
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Jared Hagert	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Zachary Ista	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	AB
Representative Andrew Marschall	N
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Jeremy Olson	Y
Representative Shannon Roers Jones	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	N

10-2-2 Motion carried. Rep Heinert is carrier.

10:10 AM Chairman Porter closed the meeting.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1404: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (10 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
HB 1404 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

TESTIMONY

HB 1404



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Matt Heilman

District 7
5501 Flatrock Drive
Bismarck, ND 58503-8929
mheilman@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Education
Political Subdivisions

January 26, 2023

Chairman Porter and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am Representative Matt Heilman representing district seven of Bismarck. I come before you today to present House Bill 1404 which is to protect carrying on college campuses. The bill not only protects concealed carry of dangerous weapons and firearms, but also protects sprays and aerosols as forms of protection. Students and people on college campuses should be prepared for when situations turn for the worst. It is not feasible or expected of a college to have their jurisdictions swarming with campus police around the clock at all times. This policy will serve as a deterrent for those who wish to do harm. An individual will be more attracted to committing an act of violence in an area they know dangerous weapons or sprays are not allowed.

There have been many unfortunate events in our country where there have been violent acts committed on college campuses. When an individual is a victim or potential victim of a violent crime on campus there won't always be someone there to help or save them.

College campuses in parts of the country have started to ban sprays such as Boston University, Tufts University, Northeastern University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Many people do not feel comfortable carrying

a firearm and prefer carrying an item like pepper spray. It is in our best interest to ensure that policies like these never enter our state. People on campus grounds should be allowed to protect themselves.

I attempted to find school policies in North Dakota when in regard to firearms and dangerous weapons. North Dakota colleges that currently prohibit or limit dangerous weapons (defined in 62.1-01 of NDCC) are NDSU, University of North Dakota, Bismarck State College, Williston State College, Minot State University, Dickinson State College, Valley City State University, Mayville State University, North Dakota State College of Science, and Lake Region State College.

I am more than happy to stand for any questions you may have and I respectfully ask for a do pass recommendation.

Proposed Amendment: Page 1 Line 17

Remove “-.02” to have it read as:

Allow any employee of a college, university, or any other institution of higher education to interfere with the carrying of a concealed firearm or dangerous weapon by an individual authorized to do so under chapter 62.1-04-02; or

The reasoning for this proposed amendment is because removing that section will include all of NDCC’s definition of “dangerous weapons.” As amended, the bill will cover both permitless carry (62.1-04-02) and license to conceal carry (62.1-04-03).

January 26, 2023

Energy and Natural Resources Committee
HB 1404

Chairman Porter and Committee members:

Let the record reflect my support for House Bill 1404("HB 1404"), as written and introduced by Representatives Heilman, Bahl, Christensen, Jauck, Koppelman and Prichard, and Senator Magrum.

The intent of this Bill is to remove an undue infringement on the ability of a person, whom is already authorized to carry a concealed firearm or dangerous weapon under chapter 62.1-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, to do so on the premises of any institution under the control of the state board of higher education.

While cliché, it is not inaccurate to say that criminals do not respect, and are rarely deterred from action by, laws. That's why they're criminals. While this certainly doesn't imply all laws are of no value and should be invalidated, this logic must apply to laws that create an environment of heightened risk to the law abiding citizen via disarmament. To paraphrase Ayn Rand "[when you see that] your laws don't protect you from them, but protect them from you--you may know that your society is doomed."

The inability of lawfully-authorized persons to carry and possess firearms or dangerous weapons on campuses, universities, and the like places that person in an environment of heightened risk. Such prohibition removes from the citizen his/her God-given right to self-preservation. No man or institution has the right to supersede such inalienable rights, and HB 1404 is a positive step in righting a statutory wrong.

"Am armed society is a polite society." --Robert Heinlein.

I respectfully request a "do pass" recommendation from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Respectfully,

Matthew S. Simon

HB1404 – Testimony Against

Dear Representatives,

I am asking that you please vote against HB1404 for many reasons:

- **College campus firearms and tear gas sections:** Having a college student myself, I can tell you that he is not comfortable with allowing firearms or tear gas on campus.
 - Studies indicate that allowing firearms on campus increases instances of negligent gun violence, unintentional discharge, suicides, and homicides and does not prevent mass shootings.
 - This legislation would also burden schools financially and increase their insurance costs and legal liabilities.
 - *Resource:* [The Danger of Guns on Campus | Everytown Research & Policy](#) for details and research supporting these statements.
- **Zoning ordinance section:** I disagree with what is being proposed. I think that zoning ordinances related to gun sales actually do make sense. It doesn't seem reasonable to allow firearms sales out of homes or college campuses. I wouldn't feel safe in my neighborhood if people were always coming and going with weapons from a neighbor's house.

Jackie Beller

Treasurer – Moms Demand Action for Gun Safety in American - FM

**HB 1404**January 26th, 2023

Christopher Scott, North Dakota Student Association

701-340-3380 | Christopher.m.scott@ndus.edu

Chair Porter and Members of the Committee: My name is Christopher Scott, I am current President of the North Dakota Student Association, and I am testifying in opposition of HB 1404. If passed this bill would prevent the State Board of Higher Education from prohibiting an individual authorized to conceal carry, to conceal carry on a college institution's campus.

The North Dakota Student Association was established in 1969 dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects Higher Education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions meeting monthly to engage students in ND Higher Education policy. Our mission is to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to give a student perspective on higher education policy.

In past legislative sessions, the NDSA has taken opposing stances to gun carry on campuses, including [NDSA-16-2021](#), which is a resolution against HB 1311 and any other gun carry bills during the 67th Legislative Session. According to a study conducted by John Hopkins University in 2016, 77% felt either very unsafe or somewhat unsafe, 3% said they would feel much safer, and 18% responded with slightly safer if faculty, staff, students, and visitors could carry weapons on campus. It is our belief that students must feel safe in places of learning

One of the biggest challenges college students' face is mental health. 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 pandemic. According to 2022 article published by the Mayo Clinic Health System, 44% of students

reported having symptoms of depression and anxiety, with another recent student finding that 1 in 3 college students experience significant depression and anxiety. The article state that young adults are increasingly faced with navigating America's culture of hyperachievement and the fear of failure. Demanding schedules, and social pressures compound, and it can be overwhelming to be a college student. Many students struggle with deteriorating mental health and may turn to suicide. According to a study conducted by the Healthy Minds Network in 2021, 13% of students have suicidal ideation, 5% have made a suicide plan, and 1% have attempted suicide.

Having guns on campus would makes the means for committing suicide more easily accessible and more students may turn suicidal ideations into attempts at suicide. Immediate access to guns in one's residence has been linked to increases in suicides, thus access to firearms on campus and in residence halls could lead to increases in completed student suicides Additionally, according to a 2020 study conducted by Stanford medicine, men who own handguns are 8 times more likely to die of gun suicides than those who don't and women who own handguns are 35 times more likely to die of gun suicides than those who don't. One of the consequences this bill may inflict is increased suicide rates across the North Dakota University System. Students may take advantage of the access to a lethal weapon in a time of hopelessness.

Additionally, allowing concealed carry on campuses would increase the potential for a school shooting or homicide to occur at a higher education institution. A study conducted by Stanford researcher John Donohue and colleagues found that states that have passed right to carry laws experiences a 13 to 15 percent increase in aggregate violent crime rates, over a period of 10 years than states that did not. A 2017 report by the FBI, for every time a gun was used in self-defense, there were 35 reports of criminal gun homicides, totaling 10,380 criminal gun homicides for the year, and 298 that were justified, concluding that guns are rarely used for self-defense but are much more likely to be used for acts of violence against others.

The increased danger to individuals in the NDUS and on institutional campuses posed by HB 1404 is an egregious attack on campus safety. The legislature should not 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. On behalf of the North Dakota Student Association, and the NDUS students across the state, I urge a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB 1404.

[Handgun ownership associated with much higher suicide risk | News Center | Stanford Medicine](#)

[Self-Defense Gun Use | Violence Policy Center \(vpc.org\)](#)

[Concealed carry doesn't guarantee our safety — it puts us at greater risk – Chicago Tribune](#)

[College students and depression - Mayo Clinic Health System](#)

[College students with suicidal and self-injurious behavior U.S. 2021 | Statista](#)

**HB 1404**

January 26, 2023

Seth Lumley, NDSU Student Government

seth.lumley@ndus.edu – (507) 481-5510

Chairman Porter and Members of the Committee: My name is Seth Lumley, and I am the Executive Commissioner of Legislative Affairs for North Dakota State University's Student Government. I would like to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1404 and to present the perspective of NDSU students on HB 1404.

NDSU Student Government is an organization of students at NDSU elected and appointed to represent the interests of the NDSU student body both externally at places like the capitol and internally through our student senate. We are comprised of members from all academic colleges at North Dakota State University, ensuring students from all majors and backgrounds have a voice. Our mission is to leave the university better than we arrived through ensuring that student voices are heard both on campus and at the legislature.

At NDSU, students have the opportunity to secure their firearms with our university police. Should the student have a need to access their firearm, all they must do is show an officer their ID, a receipt tag given to them when they checked in the firearm, and fill out a form. Importantly, this service is available at all times. This system has proven to be a safe and secure way to ensure our on-campus students can have their firearms nearby if they should ever have need for them while keeping our classrooms and on-campus living spaces safe.

Our campus police work diligently to make certain that NDSU remains a safe place for students to learn without fear. If this bill passes, their job becomes harder and our campus becomes less safe. Without a safe environment to learn, students will be more likely to leave North Dakota and less likely to come here in the first place. So please, I urge you to keep our college campuses safe by opposing HB 1404. Thank you Chairman Porter and Members of the Committee.



January 26, 2023

Chairman Todd Porter
House Energy and Natural Resources
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

Re: Testimony in support of House Bill 1404 relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus

Dear Chairman Porter,

On behalf of our members, I am submitting to you today my written testimony in support of House Bill 1404 and to ask that the members of this committee vote favorably on this bill.

House Bill 1404 amends North Dakota law to recognise the right of an individual, not otherwise prohibited, to carry a concealed firearm, dangerous weapon, or self-defense pepper spray on a college or university campus, and to prohibit the state board of higher education from denying such individuals the right to do so.

Laws which deny individuals their right to keep and bear arms under the guise of public safety are a blatant violation of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Second Amendment protects “the right of the people to keep and bear arms”--regardless of whether the government thinks it a good idea to ban firearms from certain locations.

Our lives are a gift from our Creator. And as part of this gift, humanity has been endowed with certain rights, including the right to life. The right to life means that individuals have the right to take the necessary actions for the support, development, and well-being of their own life. Moreover, it means that one has the right to self-ownership, self-sustenance, self-government, self-preservation, and self-defence. These inherently interwoven principles also naturally imply that our rights serve as a legal barrier, protecting individuals from the infringements of others. This timeless truth is the same regardless of whether the infringing misconduct is instigated by a lawless individual or by the actions of an unjust government.

As obvious gifts from the Creator, these individual rights are therefore inalienable — a term that means “not capable of being taken away or denied” as well as “not transferable to any other.” Thus, a government cannot strip away the right to keep and bear arms simply because it thinks it is too dangerous. A fact acknowledged by the Supreme Court of the United States in *McDonald v. Chicago*, “the right to keep and bear arms... is not the only constitutional right that has controversial public safety implications.”

Currently, North Dakota, along with many other states, prohibits the possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon on a college campus, denying the God-given rights of many North Dakotans, and creating dangerous “gun-free zones.” Unfortunately, all too often, these gun free zones are really nothing more than criminal safe zones. And laws which prohibit the right to keep and bear arms for self-defence virtually guarantee that the only person armed at the scene of an attack will be the criminal.

There are many who argue against the carrying of firearms on a college campus, stating that it is simply too dangerous and will do more harm than good. But we must not fail to remember that the Second Amendment protects the liberties of *all* Americans; and in a truly free society, individuals will, at times, conduct themselves in an unfortunate manner. Hence, Thomas Jefferson’s preference for the “tempestuous seas of liberty” over the “calm of despotism.”

House Bill 1404 will not only address the safety and self-protection issues created by gun free zones, but will also restore the rights to so many who live, work and visit the college campuses of North Dakota.

That is why, on behalf of our members, Gun Owners of America supports House Bill 1404, and I urge the committee to vote favorably on this bill.

Sincerely,

Iain Graeme
Rocky Mountain & Great Plains Region Director
Gun Owners of America



State Capitol – 600 E Boulevard Ave – Dept. 215
Bismarck ND 58505-0230
Phone: 701.328.2960 Fax: 701.328.2961
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HB 1404

House Energy and Natural Resources

January 26, 2022

Katie Fitzsimmons, NDUS Director of Student Affairs
701-328-4109 | katie.fitzsimmons@ndus.edu

Chair Porter and Committee Members: my name is Katie Fitzsimmons and I serve as the Director of Student Affairs for the North Dakota University System. I am representing the System Office and the NDUS campuses in opposition to HB 1404. The bill would allow for the possession of a concealed firearm on our campuses and removes the authority of the State Board of Higher Education to restrict such action. I would like to focus on several issues in my testimony today: current State Board Policy regarding firearms and the role of the Board; the varied environments on our campuses; our campus police departments and crime rates; and finally, a note on brain development and access to lethal means.

Under current law, NDUS institutions are classified as “public gatherings,” where the possession of firearms and dangerous weapons is restricted. As a result, the State Board of Higher Education enacted State Board Policy 916.1 to align with state law, which prohibits the possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in campus buildings owned or operated by the State Board of Higher Education. However, recognizing that there may be necessary exceptions to this general rule, Policy 916.1 authorizes the Chancellor or institution president to permit a qualifying individual to store a firearm or dangerous weapon in a campus residence provided that certain requirements are met. Additionally, most of our campuses provide secure weapon storage options for our students. At this time, this policy works well for our students, faculty, and staff. As a result, the System Office sees no benefit, and many potential drawbacks, to expanding firearm possession on our campuses.

The members of the State Board of Higher Education are appointed by the Governor. They, much like state legislators, are everyday North Dakotans who care deeply about the success, relevancy, and purpose of the North Dakota University System. The Board members reflect the populace: conservative, thoughtful, and dedicated to enhancing the workforce in our state. The Board is equipped to make fitting and timely policy for the institutions, as each campus is unique and nuanced.

Speaking of our which, our campuses are places where students of all ages go to learn, live, eat, workout, perform, practice, research, and compete. Students sleep on the property, faculty and staff work all hours, we have campus police and security to respond to emergencies, and our campuses have cafeterias, swimming pools, and theaters while boasting classrooms, labs, and libraries. Most of these spaces are open to the public. When you compare the happenings of a campus to that of a courthouse, a K-12 school, or a state office building, it is plain to see that we are a different animal than other public gathering spaces. And perhaps, we should be treated differently. I think we could have a robust discussion about what spaces on campuses are permissible for concealed carry and at what times, but with campuses, you are “in for a penny; in for a pound.” This bill does not allow for campuses to adjust concealed carry policies to their unique spaces and events, nor to their staff or resources available.

Third, like the excellent law enforcement officers in the state of North Dakota, NDUS campus police officers do a remarkable job keeping our campus communities safe. These officers know the students, faculty, and staff and are familiar with the physical environment and the flow of life on campus. Often, this allows campus police officers to intervene and deescalate situations before they become dangerous. The North Dakota University System would like to leave the enforcement of law and order in the hands of the trained professionals. Furthermore, our campus police interface with public community members on our campuses on a daily basis. Adding the complicated factor of having armed visitors could pose additional challenges to our campus police and security teams. Which highlights the discussion of how each of our campuses possess different levels of policing and security. While NDSU and UND have robust police departments with sworn officers, some of our campuses have unarmed part-time security staff that lock the doors at night. For state statute to broadly administer new public safety implications for all campuses is not equitable. If a new weapons possession consideration were to pass, the North Dakota University System would respectfully request that campuses and the State Board make determinations for what is best for each unique campus and a consideration to adjust our appropriation to adequately staff and train our campuses in this area of public safety.

While the North Dakota University System understands that criminal behavior is not predictable, historically speaking, we experience very little violent crime on our campuses and thus, our students, faculty, and staff report feeling safe. In fact, 97% of UND students

report feeling safe on campus. Which stands to reason that many students, faculty, and staff, do not feel the need to be armed and why some of our campuses do not have a need for a full police force. Here is a comparison of the crime rates on our campuses compared to the state of North Dakota:

	NDUS 2021	Per 100,000	ND 2021	Per 100,000
Robbery	2	2.5	188	24.26
Burglary	19	23.75	2923	377.19
Motor Vehicle theft	6	7.5	1992	257.05
Rape	20	25	440	56.78
Weapons violations	1	1.25	683	88.13
Murder	0	0	17	2.19

<https://crimestats.nd.gov/public/View/Dispview.aspx?ReportId=3> and 2021 Annual Campus Safety Reports

As you can see, our campuses experience rates of crime that are miniscule compared to some of the statewide rates. Though in saying such a thing, I do not intend to downplay the impact of the crimes simply because they happened less frequently, my note is that our campuses are safer than what the rest of North Dakota might experience in their communities.

Finally, the added level of suicide risk this would pose to our campuses is real. I believe everyone here understands that the greater the access to lethal means, the higher the suicide rate. 50% of those that die by suicide decided to take such action less than five minutes earlier. 57% of suicides in the state of North Dakota happen with the means of a firearm. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-34. Added to that, our campus population is primarily made of 18-24 year olds, who do not have fully formed frontal lobes, and thus, lack full executive function including complex decision making and impulse control. We are far less concerned about homicide or accidental injury on our campuses than we are about access to self-harm. The more time and distance we can place between an individual under stress and a firearm, the more likely we are to save that life.

As previously stated, North Dakota Century Code and State Board Policy prohibit firearms and dangerous weapons from campus property, and the State Board has not yet weighed in on this bill or any others pertaining to firearms. On behalf of the System Office and the campuses, I respectfully request a Do Not Pass on HB 1404. I thank you for your time and service and stand ready to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

OPINION ON 2023 HOUSE BILLS

CRAIG ROE—ND CWL INSTRUCTOR/ BCI ND, FFL Holder

General opinion on all House bills 2023 regarding firearms rights. As the wording of the US Constitution states, The right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, it seems they are still, in many cases, being infringed at the Federal level and here in our own state of ND. The Second Amendment does not give the right to keep and bear arms, it restricts the government from infringing on the rights we naturally have. Any and all restrictions should be unconstitutional.

As pertains to our state of ND and the upcoming specific bills;

HB 1339—I agree that anyone who can legally enter the state and is not disqualified from owning firearms should have the right to bear those arms in the state. To own said firearms means that in most cases they have gone through background checks and that alone should give the right to bear arms anywhere in the US as long as state rules that are in place are followed. I would urge passage of HB 1339

HB 1340 – It seems some cities in ND feel they can restrict citizens on certain gun rights at their discretion. ND Century Code 62.1-01-03 Limitation on authority of political subdivision

From: Fitzsimmons, Katie <katie.fitzsimmons@ndus.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 11:14 AM
To: Bosch, Glenn D.; NDLA, H NAT
Cc: Porter, Todd K.; Anderson, Dick D.; Conmy, Liz; Dockter, Jason D.; Hagert, Jared; Heinert, Patrick D.; Ista, Zachary M.; Kasper, Jim M.; Marschall, Andrew; Novak, Anna; Olson, Jeremy; Roers Jones, Shannon; Ruby, Matthew; Johnson, Lisa
Subject: Follow-up data on HB 1404
Attachments: HB 1404 NDUS DNP HENR Jan 2023.pdf

Good morning Representative Bosch, Chair Porter, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Yesterday, Representative Bosch asked for more data related to suicide and NDUS students. I hope this is helpful.

In surveys conducted in 2018 and 2020 for all NDUS students, we asked about self-injurious thoughts and behaviors. These surveys also asked about substance misuse with alcohol tobacco, and other drugs; mental health; and sexual assault. We will be rotating a similar survey on a three-year basis moving forward, instead of every two years. That survey will happen this coming fall (October 2023), with data available in the spring of 2024.

	2018	2020
Suicidal thoughts	22.8%	25.4%
Suicidal plan	6.0%	8.8%
Suicide attempt	2.0%	2.9%

Compared to the [2021 YRBS \(Youth Risk and Behavior Survey\)](#) completed for ND high school students (page 7 of the linked report):

	2021 YRBS
Suicidal thoughts/contemplation	18.6%
Suicidal plan	14.8%
Suicide attempt	6.1%

You can see the serious action steps toward suicide diminish as students age. In a way, college can be a protective factor, but also, one could argue that the students that struggle with mental health and stability in high school do not go onto college. Regardless, this also plays into the discussion we had about brain development; as we age, we develop better neuro pathways from the brain stem to the frontal lobe, which helps regulate impulse control and more complex thoughts that help us see past the here and now. A student in crisis at the age of 20 versus the age of 14 is more able to say, "I want to kill myself now because I am so hopeless and everything sucks... but I know things will get better." And once that 20-year old turns 25 and 30 on up, that thought process is even more fortified and more likely.

As far as how these numbers compare to the general population; I don't have direct information for comparison. You can visit the [CDC's website for suicide data](#), which includes points such as (I added a comparison to the current population of 331.9 million in the US):

- 1 death by suicide every 11 minutes in the US

- 12.2 million Americans seriously thought about suicide (3%)
- 3.2 million made a suicide plan (1%)
- 1.2 million attempted suicide (.36%)

Thank you for your time and consideration; I hope you each have a restful and rejuvenating weekend!

-Katie Fitzsimmons

Katie Cashman Fitzsimmons

Director of Student Affairs

NORTH DAKOTA
University System

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