

Legislative Priority: Personal Protection on Campus

It's bad policy that, currently, a college student has to forfeit his or her basic human right of personal security and protection as a condition of obtaining higher education in Texas. To correct this injustice, the Texas Aggie Conservatives (TAC) calls upon the members of the 83rd Texas Legislature to enact public policy that will allow concealed handgun license holders to carry concealed handguns on the campuses of public colleges and universities.

The Aggie Conservatives expect the following policies to be enacted into law this legislative session:

- **Legalize licensed concealed handgun carry in public college and university buildings, including dormitories;**
- **Prohibit public colleges and universities from opting-out of concealed carry on campus through school specific policy or student referendum;**
- **Prohibit public colleges and universities from posting misleading “gun-free” or “30.06” signs in buildings/areas where licensed concealed carry is permitted;**
- **The ability of private colleges and universities to allow licensed concealed carry on their campuses.**

The Texas A&M University Student Government Association, which speaks on behalf of the entire Texas A&M student body, endorsed concealed carry on campus in November 2012. The Texas A&M Student Senate overwhelmingly supported concealed carry on campus, voting 41-16 for the *Texas A&M Personal Protection Bill*, which is included in this packet.

“Let it be Further Enacted(2): That the Student Government Association, on behalf of the students of Texas A&M University, calls upon the legislature of the State of Texas to change current law to allow students, faculty, staff and guests with a valid concealed handgun license the right to self-defense on all University property, including buildings and residence halls, and to prevent public universities from creating policies seeking disciplinary action against students, faculty and staff who are in accordance with state law.”

The 85 members of the Texas Aggie Conservatives consider concealed carry on campus to be among the most important policy issues facing Texans. The Aggie Conservatives regularly communicate with over 45,000 Texas A&M students via email and campus events. We will be sure to let our members, our members' families, Texas A&M students, and former students know how you vote on this issue. Without a doubt, the Aggie Conservatives will hold accountable any legislator who votes against concealed carry on campus or votes to allow university administrators to opt-out of concealed carry on their campus.

Recent events in College Station – such as a deadly shooting just south of campus in August 2012 – and in Texas – such as a student seriously injuring several with a knife in Houston last week – highlight the threat that students face while on campus and during their commute to campus. Indeed, in December 2011, a bank robber supposedly boarded a Texas A&M bus to flee the scene. Currently, CHL holders are not allowed to carry on university vehicles and buses, but that hasn't stopped bank robbers and other criminals. It's time to empower students, faculty, and guests. Let's restore their right to self-defense.

It's important to remember that only trained, licensed, and carefully-screened adults over the age of 21 would be allowed to utilize concealed carry on Texas college campuses as a means of self-protection. This includes many of the professors and instructors who spend most of the days of their lives on campus. They, too, deserve the basic human right of personal protection.

Outside of Texas, more than 91 campuses currently allow concealed carry on campus and have done so for a combined total of 800 semesters. None these colleges have reported an incident in which a license holder used a firearm to threaten or commit an act of violence.

By implementing concealed carry by license holders on public college and university campuses, you will be upholding one of the most important basic rights: the right to life and self-defense. This is a noble and worthy cause, and the Aggie Conservatives look forward to seeing that you supported true concealed carry on campus legislation when it came for a vote before your committee or chamber.

The following is a list of legislation supported by TAC, along with how each bill should be improved, if at all:

- **SB 182**
- **HB 706** – It is the opinion of TAC that: all public colleges and universities respect the validity of any out of state concealed carry license of which Texas has a reciprocity agreement, and establish no rule or enact any procedure prohibiting the licensed carry of concealed weapons of such student.
- **HB 972** –TAC supports the house committee substitute HB 972 ONLY if it is amended to prohibit individual public colleges and universities from opting out of concealed carry on campus. To be perfectly clear: TAC considers it fraudulent to claim to support concealed carry on campus on the basis of voting for a bill that allows public universities to opt out. TAC supported the introduced HB 972, and we call upon the legislature to amend the current HB 972 to prohibit individual public universities from opting out.
- **HB 1078**