

## ***Texas Students for Concealed Carry - Press Releases - Feb. 17 - April 11, 2016***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 02/17/2016

### **SCC's Preliminary Response to Campus Carry Policies Approved by UT-Austin President Gregory Fenves**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Over the past two months, Students for Concealed Carry has [repeatedly](#) explained [how](#) two of the proposals of UT-Austin's campus carry working group [violate](#) the intent of Texas's new [campus carry law](#) and how one of those proposals greatly increases the odds that a license holder will suffer an accidental discharge on campus. Unfortunately, UT-Austin President Gregory Fenves chose to punt the issue to the courts rather than stand up to a [cabal](#) of fear-mongering professors.

SCC is confident that the university's gun-free-offices policy and empty-chamber policy will not stand up to [legal scrutiny](#); therefore, our Texas chapter will now shift its focus to litigation. Simultaneously, we will continue to work with the governor's office to explore the [possibility](#) of getting a clarification of the campus carry law added to Governor Abbott's impending call for a special legislative session to address school finance.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 02/23/2016

### **What other laws should public colleges be allowed to "opt out" of?**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Following the announcement that UT-Austin President Gregory Fenves will, in accordance with [Texas Senate Bill 11](#), allow the licensed concealed carry of handguns in most university classrooms, numerous pundits and media outlets are once again calling for Texas legislators to allow public colleges to opt out of the state's new "campus carry" law. In a February 23 [editorial](#), the *Austin American-Statesman* argues, "Public university officials should have the same authority as private campuses to opt out of campus carry." This raises an obvious question: In what other areas does the *Statesman's* editorial board think public colleges should have the same authority as private colleges?

Should public university officials be allowed to require church attendance by students or to prohibit same-sex dating relationships between students? Should they be allowed to limit student speech to only that which aligns with a certain religion or ideology? What if such restrictions are what a majority of students, faculty, and staff really, really want? Shouldn't the majority opinion on campus trump an unpopular law?

The reality is that private schools have always operated under [vastly different rules](#) from their public counterparts, and that dichotomy is why Texas' new campus carry law establishes one standard for public colleges and another for private colleges. The same private universities that can dictate which sociopolitical causes students are allowed to support and which movies students are allowed to see can prohibit licensed concealed carry on campus. However, the same state universities that must honor freedom of speech, freedom of religion, etc., must also honor a state-issued license to carry a handgun.

SB 11 passed through the Texas Legislature by a wide margin. And contrary to the claims of anti-campus carry activists, those lawmakers were acting in accordance with the wishes of their constituents—[two](#) 2015 [polls](#) (the only impartial polls on the subject) conducted as a joint effort of the *Texas Tribune* and the University of Texas at Austin found more Texans in support of campus carry than opposed to it. Whether campus carry has broad support on a particular campus is not the legislature's concern.

[Antonia Okafor](#), Southwest regional director for Students for Concealed Carry, commented, "Campus carry hasn't led to the downfall of the University of Utah or the University of Colorado, and it won't be the downfall of the University of Texas. I have little sympathy for the argument that campus carry is an unpopular law, given that just fifty years ago, the law allowing someone like me to attend the University of Texas was itself an unpopular law. There is a reason we don't pass laws the same way we vote for the next *American Idol*."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 02/23/2016

### **Why are professors more afraid of guns carried legally than illegally?**

**AUSTIN, TX** - A [slide show](#) at a recent University of Houston faculty senate meeting suggested that professors may want to "be careful discussing certain topics" or "drop certain topics from [their] curriculum" when the state's new campus carry law takes effect. This begs the question: Why should professors be more concerned about the licensed, carefully vetted students who'll be carrying guns **legally** than about the unlicensed, unvetted students who may already be carrying guns **illegally**?

During a January 26 [hearing](#) of the Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs, Joan Neuberger, professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin and co-chair of the [Gun Free UT](#) steering committee, testified, "Students come to speak to me in my office all the time....The reason that they can come talk to me and my colleagues is because we create an environment in the classroom that is an environment of absolute trust and respect. And I don't think I can do this if I don't know if the person sitting next to me is carrying a gun in their backpack." Ironically, Dr. Neuberger already doesn't know if the person sitting next to her is carrying a gun in his or her backpack.

College campuses like the University of Texas and the University of Houston are open environments—there are no metal detectors or bag checks. A person can just as easily walk into a classroom carrying a backpack full of guns as carrying a backpack full of books. The concerns of Dr. Neuberger and the UH faculty senate are indicative of the mindset that the real danger stems not from criminals who disregard the law but from lawfully armed citizens who suddenly "snap." However, that assumption is not borne out by the facts.

Various studies by [forensic psychologists](#) and the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) have concluded that the notion of someone simply "snapping" and committing mass murder is a myth. Also, [statistics from the Texas Department of Public Safety](#) suggest that a Texan with a concealed handgun license (CHL)/license to carry (LTC) is only about 1/7 as likely to commit aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as is an unlicensed Texan. Furthermore, the [final report](#) of the campus carry policy working group at the University of Texas at Austin concluded, "Our examination of states that already have campus carry revealed little evidence of campus violence that can be directly linked to campus carry, and none that involves an intentional shooting....Most respondents reported that campus carry had not had much direct impact on student life or academic affairs."

There is simply no justification for a professor who has previously expressed little or no concern about the possible **illegal** presence of guns in his or her classroom to decide to soften his or her curriculum because of the possible **legal** presence of guns in his or her classroom.

SCC Southwest Director Antonia Okafor commented, "Do these professors not think that the type of person who'd pull a gun during a classroom debate might also ignore an honor-system-based law prohibiting guns on campus? Do they honestly feel better knowing that any guns in their classrooms are being carried by individuals with a complete disregard for both school policy and state law?"

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**Campus carry isn't bad for higher education; paranoia about campus carry is.**

**AUSTIN, TX** - In enlightened modern America, the risk of dying of a shark attack is most frequently referenced in comparison to one's odds of winning the Powerball lottery, but in the summer of 1975, America's coastal tourism business took a major hit as a result of the June release of the world's first summer blockbuster—*Jaws*. The risk of dying from a shark attack was just as low then as it is today—in fact, there were no fatal shark attacks in U.S. waters that year—but a cinema-inspired nationwide bout of galeophobia (fear of sharks) had real, negative consequences on the nation afflicted.

In a [speech](#) delivered February 4 at the 2016 National Prayer Breakfast, U.S. President Barack Obama said, "The consequences of [fear] can be worse than any outward threat." That statement is reflected throughout America's checkered past, from fear of witchcraft leading to twenty executions in Salem, Mass., to fear of vaccines leading to a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases. Now, Texas is seeing fear of campus carry take a real, measurable toll on the state's institutions of higher education. However, just as witches were not to blame for the Salem witch trials, and just as vaccines are not to blame for the negative results of the anti-vaccine movement, campus carry is not to blame for the current atmosphere of fear on Texas college campuses.

The professors threatening to [resign their positions](#) or [remove controversial material](#) from their curricula have no more basis for their actions than did the people who canceled summer vacation plans 41 years ago. All available evidence suggests that licensed concealed carry will not make Texas college campuses any less safe. The [report](#) of UT-Austin's campus carry policy working group notes, "Our examination of states that already have campus carry revealed little evidence of campus violence that can be directly linked to campus carry, and none that involves an intentional shooting...We found that the evidence does not support the claim that a causal link exists between campus carry and an increased rate of sexual assault. We found no evidence that campus carry has caused an increase in suicide rates on campuses in other states." The report goes on to state, "We reached out to 17 research universities in the seven campus-carry states...Most respondents reported that campus carry had not had much direct impact on student life or academic affairs."

Those findings are consistent with [the preponderance of peer-reviewed studies](#) on licensed concealed carry—including a [2015 study from Texas A&M University](#)—which have found that concealed carry cannot be shown to lead to an increase in violent crime. [Statistically](#), a Texan is significantly more likely to be struck by [lightning](#) than to be murdered or negligently killed by a concealed handgun license (CHL)/license to carry (LTC) holder. Texas CHL/LTC holders are convicted of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon at 1/7 the rate of unlicensed Texans (NOTE: that statistic includes all Texas children in the number of unlicensed Texans; the contrast is even greater when only adults are counted). Therefore, what basis do these professional academics—men and women trained to rely on empirical data when drawing conclusions—have for taking actions as drastic as resigning their positions or dumbing-down course materials?

When a member of a hate group bombs a house of worship, society doesn't blame the worshipers for scaring the attacker to the point of violence; we blame the fearmongers and hate speakers who taught the attacker to fear and hate what he doesn't understand. Neither Texas's new campus carry law, the legislators who passed it, nor the activists who pushed it are responsible for the actions of professors overwhelmed by unjustified fear. Intellectually, these professors are no different than someone whose actions are defined by an irrational fear of sharks, witchcraft, or vaccines. We can pity them for their inability to function rationally, but we must not acquiesce to their phobic delusions.

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### **SCC's Preliminary Response to the University of Houston's Draft Campus Carry Policy**

**AUSTIN, TX** - The University of Houston's [draft campus carry policy](#) is a major improvement over the policy proposed by the University of Texas; however, the UH policy is too aggressive in attempting to prohibit licensed concealed carry in any location where minor children may be present, something the Texas Legislature never intended.

Students for Concealed Carry commends the University of Houston campus carry task force for avoiding the types of overreaching policies [proposed by the University of Texas](#) and for having the foresight to propose policies such as making community gun storage available at the campus police station and allowing faculty and staff to temporarily store handguns in locked desks or cabinets.

SCC's one concern with the UH draft policy is that the task force seems to have operated under the assumption that licensed concealed carry cannot be allowed anywhere children are likely to be present. This was clearly never the intent of the Texas Legislature, which saw fit to allow licensed concealed carry in movie theaters, shopping malls, churches, grocery stores, restaurants, all state museums, all public libraries, and even the Texas Capitol. SCC hopes to see the UH policy refined so that, with regard to locations where children may be present, licensed concealed carry is only prohibited at day care facilities and primary/secondary schools—the locations dictated by state law.

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### **SCC makes anti-campus carry conspiracy theorists an offer they can't refuse.**

**AUSTIN, TX** - In response to anti-campus carry activists at the [University of Texas](#) and the [University of Houston](#) who espouse the conspiracy theory ([started](#) by the gun-control group [Everytown for Gun Safety](#)) that Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) was founded by and is funded by well-financed groups within the Tea Party, libertarian, and gun-rights movements, SCC announced today that it will donate \$5,000 to any gun-control group—or to any 501(c)(3) non-profit organization designated by the gun-control group—that can, by March 31, 2016, prove any of the following:

1. The national organization Students for Concealed Carry (SCC)/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC) currently receives or previously received regular funding from one or more of the following organizations:
  - A. The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC);
  - B. The Leadership Institute (LI);
  - C. CampusReform.org;
  - D. Gun Owners of America (GOA);
  - E. The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF);
  - F. The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA);
  - G. The National Association for Gun Rights (NAGR);
  - H. Texas Gun Rights (TXGR);
  - I. The Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC);
  - J. The National Rifle Association (NRA);
  - K. The National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA);
  - L. The Texas State Rifle Association (TSRA);

- M. Any national or statewide gun-rights group, Second Amendment organization, firearms trade organization, or firearms manufacturer;
  - N. The Tea Party Patriots;
  - O. Tea Party Express;
  - P. Tea Party Nation;
  - Q. National Tea Party Federation (NTPF);
  - R. The Nationwide Tea Party Coalition;
  - S. FreedomWorks;
  - T. Americans for Tax Reform;
  - U. Americans for Prosperity (AFP);
  - V. Any Tea Party organization;
  - W. Charles G. Koch and/or David H. Koch (aka the Koch brothers);
  - X. Any political party;
  - Y. Any political campaign; or
  - Z. Any political action committee;
2. The Texas chapter of Students for Concealed Carry/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus currently receives or previously received regular funding from one or more of the organizations listed in claim #1;
  3. One or more of the organizations listed in claim #1 played a role in the conception and/or founding of Students for Concealed Carry/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus;
  4. One or more of the organizations listed in claim #1 provided startup capital to Students for Concealed Carry/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus;
  5. One or more of the organizations listed in claim #1 have or had a leadership role in or measure of governance over Students for Concealed Carry/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus; or
  6. Students for Concealed Carry/Students for Concealed Carry on Campus has ever been governed or controlled by any individual or organization other than the directors publicly named by SCC/SCCC at that time;

Antonia Okafor, Southwest director for Students for Concealed Carry, commented, "Since being founded in 2007 by college students shocked by the Virginia Tech massacre, Students for Concealed Carry has faced occasional [rumors](#) about its origins and funding. Such rumors are without factual basis but serve opponents' intended purpose of derailing any discussion of [the facts](#) of campus carry."

The currently circulating conspiracy theory—specifically, that SCC is a Tea Party front funded and directed by some combination of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the Leadership Institute (LI), and/or Gun Owners of America (GOA)—stems from a July 5 [article](#) in *The Trace*, the [official publication](#) of the gun-control group Everytown for Gun Safety. While it's fair to assume that *The Trace* is no more impartial on issues of gun rights than is the NRA publication *America's First Freedom*, SCC doesn't need to rely on ad hominem attacks to rebut the article's claims.

In its 3,252 words, the *Trace* article, titled "The Secret History of the Campus Carry Movement," offers only two pieces of evidence—both circumstantial—to support its claims. First, it notes that the Leadership Institute offers grants to campus-based conservative groups. Second, it notes that the Leadership Institute and Gun Owners of America together advertised in 2006 that they were looking for college students to start "pro-gun" groups on university campuses. Neither of those facts has any connection to the founding, funding, or administration of Students for Concealed Carry.

The Leadership Institute's grant program gives money to small campus groups, not large national organizations. Several of SCC's campus chapters have applied for and received one-time \$500 startup grants from the Leadership Institute, but that money was awarded to individual campus chapters, not SCC's Texas chapter or national organization. For example, SCC's University of Texas or University of Houston chapter might get \$500 to help with purchasing signs, T-shirts, tabling supplies, etc.; however, SCC's state and national leaders would never see any of that money or even know about it unless someone from that campus chapter happened to mention it to them. Donations received at the campus level help that chapter establish itself on campus but do not help SCC's state-level lobbying efforts and do not influence SCC's agenda, which is set at the national level. Because SCC does not provide funding to campus chapters, campus chapters are free to seek funding as they see fit.

As for LI and GOA placing a 2006 advertisement expressing interest in starting "pro-gun" groups on college campuses, that is what is known as a coincidence (a coincidence that nobody at SCC was aware of until *The Trace* reported on it). Presumably, the author of the article dug up LI and GOA's ten-year-old advertisement and drew his own conclusions.

Far from "laying the groundwork for SCC," this effort by LI and GOA seems to have gone nowhere, as there was no sign of it a year later when SCC was founded by a political science major at the University of North Texas, in response to the mass shooting at Virginia Tech. Two months after starting SCC, that UNT student got tired of working forty hours a week at an unpaid job and stepped down. Four other unpaid volunteers then stepped up, took over, and developed an organizational structure that allowed SCC to evolve from a Facebook group and [one-page website](#) into the thriving organization it is today. Any one of those five founders would have jumped at an offer of funding (particularly, as the article claims, a \$50,000/year salary), but no such offer was ever made.

Contrary to the claims made by *The Trace*, no preexisting organization had any hand in the founding of SCC, no outside organization has ever provided regular funding to SCC, and no organization has ever provided salaries to SCC leaders (who are all unpaid volunteers). SCC has occasionally received help or cooperation from outside organizations, but such help has always been limited in scope. For example, when SCC's Texas chapter held a fundraising drive to raise money to air a [pro-campus carry television commercial](#) (to combat the [\\$80,000](#) anti-campus carry [ad buy](#) by Everytown for Gun Safety), the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA) donated \$1,500, and GOA donated \$500. Those are the two largest cash donations SCC or any of its state chapters have ever received from an outside group.

A much more common type of outside help comes in the form of groups cosponsoring events with SCC or working with SCC to push legislation (e.g., SCC and the Second Amendment Foundation co-hosted two national conferences on campus carry; SCC, the NRA, and the Texas State Rifle Association frequently shared information when working to pass campus carry in Texas). Such cooperation among organizations with a shared goal is not unusual—it does not equate to an outside organization secretly directing or funding SCC and doesn't amount to anything resembling the type of conspiracy claimed by SCC's opponents.

In a February 29 [op-ed](#) published in *Quartz* (QZ.com), Lina del Castillo, assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin, describes SCC as "the most visible, well-funded peddler of misleading information on pro-campus carry in the nation" (not surprisingly, the phrase "well-funded" links to the July 5 article from *The Trace*). If Ms. Del Castillo could see SCC's financial statements or witness the sacrifices SCC's leaders have made to keep the organization alive, she would be embarrassed for making that claim. Unlike Everytown for Gun Safety, SCC has no wealthy benefactor or rich donors footing the bill. SCC owes its existence to the small cash donations and huge time donations made by its members. The people who write SCC's [press releases](#) and [testify](#) on behalf of SCC at Senate hearings and [promote](#) SCC on college campuses all do so without compensation, because they believe in and care about this cause.

Opponents' claims about SCC's founding and funding are untrue and unproductive. Those opponents would do well to remember that intellectually honest people can disagree on questions of policy without resorting to conspiracy theories or baseless conjecture to undermine their opponents' views.

**Excerpt from SCC's [Mission Statement](#) (which hasn't changed since the organization's founding, when it was known as Students for Concealed Carry on Campus):**

Both the membership and the leadership of SCCC are made up of individuals with very diverse political backgrounds. Among SCCC's leaders you'll find conservatives, moderates, liberals, Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, Independents, etc. The members of SCCC look beyond partisanship, toward the common goal of achieving state laws and school policies based on factual evidence rather than emotional rhetoric.

...

Students for Concealed Carry on Campus is not affiliated with the NRA, a political party, or any other organization.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 03/04/2016

**Does campus carry lead to an increase in sexual assaults?**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Here are the bullet points on the debate over whether campus carry leads to an increased rate of on-campus sexual assault:

- Campus carry opponents have taken to [citing a study](#) conducted by the Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus, to argue that campus carry leads to an increase in on-campus sexual assaults.
- These campus carry opponents ignore the fact that the cited [study](#) (which was not peer-reviewed) acknowledges that its "results certainly do not prove that concealed carry causes more crime."
- These campus carry opponents ignore or dismiss the fact that the campus carry policy working group at the University of Texas at Austin [concluded](#), "[T]he evidence does not in any way support the claim of a causal link between campus carry and an increased rate of sexual assault."
- These campus carry opponents [argue](#), "Given that Colorado and Utah shield the identities of concealed-carry license holders, there is no way to know if people who hold CHLs were the perpetrators of these acts of sexual violence"; however, that is not entirely true. In both Utah and Colorado, the unlicensed possession of a firearm on a college campus is a crime (a [felony in Colorado](#), a [Class A misdemeanor in Utah](#)). Therefore, in any case in which criminal charges have been filed, it would be possible to look at both the police report and the charging documents and ascertain if the crime actually took place on a college campus (the [Clery Act](#) data used in the CKGOC study includes surrounding areas), if the suspect is reported to have used a handgun in the commission of the crime, and if the suspect was charged with the unlawful possession of a firearm on a college campus (indicating that the suspect did not possess a concealed handgun license, or CHL).
- The campus carry opponents touting this campus-carry-leads-to-rape theory **could** take these extra steps to corroborate their claims, but they don't want to because they know that no [campus-carry college](#) has reported a sexual assault in which an armed CHL holder was either the assailant or the victim.

- According to the [1996-2013 conviction rates](#) maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas CHL holders were convicted of aggravated sexual assault at 1/6 the rate of unlicensed Texans (NOTE: that statistic includes all Texas children in the number of unlicensed Texans; the contrast is even greater when only adults are counted).
- According to [licensing data](#) maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety, the rate of concealed handgun licensure among Texans age 18-23 was approximately 0.68% as of January 1, 2015.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 03/28/2016

### **Anti-campus carry activists have nothing to fear but fear itself**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Anti-campus carry activists at the University of Texas at Austin have created a self-fulfilling prophecy—they've spent so much time and energy claiming that campus carry is going to cause real problems for the university that their warnings are scaring off top talent, causing a real problem for the university. Both the [Los Angeles Times](#) and [The Daily Texan](#) recently reported that Siva Vaidhyanathan, a finalist for the deanship of UT-Austin's Moody College of Communication, withdrew his name from consideration because he doesn't believe he would be willing to discipline a professor who refuses to abide by the state's new campus carry law.

As Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) pointed out in a February 25 statement titled "[Campus carry isn't bad for higher education; paranoia about campus carry is](#)," fear of campus carry at UT-Austin is causing far more problems than has the actual implementation of campus carry on the more than 100 U.S. college campuses where it's currently allowed. When a thousand professors get together to hype a particular concern—be it campus carry, insufficient state funding for higher education, UT's deteriorating campus infrastructure, or Austin's oppressively hot summers—that harsh cacophony of voices is going to have an adverse effect on recruiting, whether justified or not.

Antonia Okafor, Southwest regional director for SCC, commented, ***"Campus carry is a molehill that groups like Gun Free UT have made into a mountain. Now those same groups want to blame campus carry when the nation's top academic talent opts for less mountainous terrain."***

Because opponents of campus carry have spent so much time and energy [overstating](#) the statistically insignificant dangers of campus carry, it should come as no surprise that people who don't know any better are starting to believe them. Well-intentioned but misguided activists at UT-Austin have created a [moral panic](#) akin to the equally baseless "Satanic panic" of the late 20th century. And like any moral panic, this one is fueled in part by the media.

The aforementioned *L.A. Times* [article](#) on Texas's campus carry law notes, ***"The experience of Utah and Colorado does not support the claim that having more gun owners on campus increases security, according to a study last year by the Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus, a nonprofit based in Croton Falls, N.Y. In both states, crime rates on college campuses increased while the student populations dropped."***

That is an interesting way of stating the facts, given that neither a promise to lower campus crime rates nor a pledge to increase student enrollment was among the [generally accepted talking points](#) for legalizing the licensed concealed carry of handguns on Texas college campuses and that there is no evidence that licensed concealed carry has negatively impacted either [crime rates](#) or [student enrollment](#) at the colleges where it's currently allowed.

SCC—the nation's only advocacy group dedicated to lobbying for the legalization of campus carry—has consistently pointed out that campus carry is about [personal protection](#), not campus protection; that college campuses are statistically [very safe](#); and that only a [tiny percentage](#) of academics are licensed to carry concealed handguns. All of that contradicts the notion that campus carry will lead to a drop in crime rates.

If SCC [doesn't think](#) campus carry is likely to lower on-campus crime rates, who does the *L.A. Times* article seek to rebut with the statement that the history of campus carry **"does not support the claim that having more gun owners on campus increases security"**? That statement strikes down a straw man constructed by the author and, despite all evidence to the contrary, leaves readers with the distinct impression that campus carry may be responsible for the purported increase in on-campus crime.

Not one college in Utah or Colorado has reported a single incident of a concealed handgun license holder using a handgun to commit a violent crime on campus (and yes, there is a [way](#) that anti-campus carry activists and the media could double-check this if they wanted to). There also hasn't been a single report of an armed license holder being the victim of a violent crime on any of these campuses. Therefore, the findings of the cited study have little bearing on the campus carry debate. In fact, the cited [study](#)—which was conducted by a gun-control group and was not peer reviewed—plainly states that its **"results certainly do not prove that concealed carry causes more crime."**

The final [report](#) of UT-Austin's campus carry policy working group notes, **"Our examination of states that already have campus carry revealed little evidence of campus violence that can be directly linked to campus carry, and none that involves an intentional shooting...We found that the evidence does not support the claim that a causal link exists between campus carry and an increased rate of sexual assault. We found no evidence that campus carry has caused an increase in suicide rates on campuses in other states."** The UT report goes on to state, **"We reached out to 17 research universities in the seven campus-carry states...Most respondents reported that campus carry had not had much direct impact on student life or academic affairs."**

The *L.A. Times* article's reference to college enrollment is equally egregious, in that the aforementioned study uses only two years of data (2012-2013) to intimate that campus carry leads to a decrease in enrollment. Even a cursory review of the raw numbers reveals that this insinuation isn't supported by a complete view of the data.

After a 2006 court ruling legalized the licensed concealed carry of handguns at all public colleges and universities in Utah, Utah's public colleges and universities saw record enrollment in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. After slight declines in 2012 and 2013, Utah again saw increased enrollment in both 2014 and 2015. There is no reason to assume causation—legalizing campus carry didn't cause enrollment to go up—however, there is clearly no negative correlation between student enrollment and the legalization of licensed concealed carry on campus.

The reporter for the *L.A. Times* draws from one dubious study by a group of activists opposed to campus carry, to lend credence to the claims of activists opposed to campus carry. That's not journalism; it's just another form of activism. The article, which includes no comments from proponents of campus carry and makes no attempt to present a clear picture of proponents' arguments, is nothing more than an editorial masquerading as news. Along with other alarmist articles, it's helping to fuel a moral panic—a totally unwarranted mass paranoia—that has already taken a toll on the Lone Star State.

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### **SCC commends UT-Tyler and Texas State University on well-crafted campus carry policies**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) commends the [University of Texas at Tyler](#) and [Texas State University](#) for adopting campus carry policies that address legitimate concerns while respecting the clear intent of [Texas Senate Bill 11](#). The policies recommended by the UT-Tyler and Texas State campus carry committees and adopted by President Rodney H. Mabry and President Denise Trauth, respectively, create clear, concise policies and limited gun-free zones that neither undermine the state's new campus carry law nor unnecessarily impede the rights of concealed handgun license (CHL)/license to carry (LTC) holders.

Antonia Okafor, Southwest regional director for SCC, commented, "The university presidents and campus carry committees at UT-Tyler and Texas State have demonstrated that it is possible for a university to adopt a campus carry policy that addresses specific concerns while still respecting the clear intent of Texas Senate Bill 11. Other Texas universities, particularly the University of Texas at Austin, would do well to learn from these examples."

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### **SCC Condemns Texas Tech and UNT Policies Prohibiting Concealed Carry at Ticketed/Large-Scale Events**

**AUSTIN, TX** - Over the past several months, Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) has repeatedly [criticized](#) policies proposed by the [University of North Texas](#) and [Texas Tech University](#) that would prohibit the licensed concealed carry of handguns at performance venues and large-scale events on university property. Now that both universities have adopted these policies, SCC is compelled to repeat these criticisms. (NOTE: UNT defines a "large-scale event" as any event at which "attendance is reasonably anticipated to exceed 200 individuals"; Texas Tech's policy specifies "performance venues" and "ticketed events"; both policies also single out events where alcohol is served.)

In the past, SCC has [illustrated](#) how unnecessary such policies are by pointing to the example of the [Austin City Limits Music Festival](#), which sees annual attendance of almost half a million people, which allows alcohol sales, and which—due to being held on municipal property and not meeting any of the criteria of a prohibited place listed under Section 46.03 or 46.035 of the Texas Penal Code—allows licensed concealed carry. However, we've recently become aware of another, equally relevant example of a large-scale event that allows licensed concealed carry—the Texas Republican Convention. According to [The Dallas Morning News](#), "A spokesman for the Republican Party of Texas confirmed Monday that both open and concealed carry will be allowed at the state's convention in May. The state party has allowed guns at its convention in the past."

Each year, the ACL music festival hosts enough twenty-something concertgoers to fill both the UNT and Texas Tech campuses several times over, and an attendee of the 2016 Texas Republican Convention will no doubt encounter more heated discussions than he or she would experience in a year on the UNT or Texas Tech campus. Given that Texas universities are supposed to develop campus carry policies based on the "nature of the student population" and the "uniqueness of the campus environment," what is the rationale for treating a large-scale event at a public university differently than a large-scale concert in a [public park](#) or a large-scale political convention at a [public conference center](#)?

Why should a concealed handgun license (CHL)/license to carry (LTC) holder who is allowed to carry a concealed handgun in a movie theater in Denton or Lubbock be prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun in a university theater at UNT or Texas Tech? Why should a licensed, vetted adult who is allowed to carry a concealed handgun at a restaurant or movie theater that serves alcohol be prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun at a

university function where alcohol is served? Although most campus carry task forces purport to seek to find on-campus corollaries to off-campus concealed carry laws, the reality is that some universities are more interested in creating entirely original policies, with no regard for where licensed concealed carry is allowed throughout the rest of the state.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 03/31/2016

### **The University of Texas System Should Take a Lesson from Texas Tech**

**AUSTIN, TX** - The board of regents of the University of Texas System would do well to heed the actions of Texas Tech University, which—on the advice of legal counsel—overruled a proposed policy that would have allowed faculty, staff, and graduate students to designate their offices as "gun-free" zones. Both Texas Tech's campus carry task force and UT-Austin's campus carry policy working group recommended that occupants be allowed to prohibit licensed concealed carry in privately held offices. However, whereas UT-Austin President Gregory Fenves chose to adopt the proposed policy, officials at Texas Tech recognized that such a policy would violate the state's campus carry law.

Reporting for KAMC News in Lubbock, reporter Alyssa Goard [writes](#):

[Interim Texas Tech] President [John] Opperman explained that after [TTU's campus carry task force] released preliminary recommendations in December, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton issued several opinions arguing that it would be illegal to ban guns from classrooms, faculty offices, and dorms.

"Offices can't be gun free---in the AG opinion was part of the factor there because the same rationale the attorney general used for classrooms applies to offices as well, so offices cannot be excluded," Opperman said.

While Paxton's opinions are not legally binding, Opperman said that TTU's general counsel advised the university to structure their policies keeping Paxton's opinions in mind. TTU's general counsel believed that Paxton's arguments would hold up in a court of law. The university has been seeking legal advice, bracing for the inevitable litigation that will spark related to the campus carry law.

As Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) has [explained](#) in multiple [press releases](#) and in [invited testimony](#) before the Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs, allowing faculty, staff, and graduate students to arbitrarily create a patchwork of criminally enforceable "gun-free" zones would violate both the letter and intent of [Texas Senate Bill 11](#).

The [law](#) says that any campus carry policies approved by a university president must be "reasonable" and cannot "have the effect of generally prohibiting license holders from carrying concealed handguns on the campus."

Allowing occupants of private offices to designate those offices as criminally enforceable "gun-free" zones would have the net effect of making it impossible for many if not most faculty, staff, and graduate students—the members of the university community most likely to hold a license to carry a concealed handgun—to lawfully carry concealed handguns on campus, because their positions often require them to enter one or more private offices on a daily basis. Prohibiting campus carry by the segment of the population most likely to take advantage of the law cannot be viewed as anything less than a general prohibition.

Furthermore, SB 11 requires universities to "widely distribute the rules, regulations, or other provisions" created by the university president—a requirement that will be difficult, nay impossible, to fulfill if any occupant of any private office can declare that office "gun-free" at any time.

Requiring license holders to explain that they cannot lawfully enter a specific office would force them to self-identify to colleagues, employers, and/or instructors, which is in clear conflict with the Texas Legislature's efforts to protect the identities of license holders. Such a policy would also make university employees the only state employees authorized to arbitrarily criminalize licensed concealed carry in their workspace. Given this policy's clear conflict with legislative precedent, it cannot be viewed as "reasonable" under any standard definition of that word.

UT-Austin's gun-free-offices policy is one of two university-approved campus carry policies—along with UT-Austin's empty-chamber policy—likely to face legal challenges this fall. It is a clear violation of both the letter and intent of Texas' new campus carry law, and Students for Concealed Carry will not rest until the policy is struck down.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 04/01/2016

### **SCC's Challenge to Anti-Campus Carry Conspiracy Theorists Goes Unanswered**

**AUSTIN, TX** – After four weeks, Students for Concealed Carry's [offer to donate \\$5,000](#) to any gun-control organization that could prove any of the common conspiracy theories about SCC's founding and/or funding came to a close without a single organization attempting to collect. The offer, which was announced in a March 3 press release and prominently advertised, throughout the 29-day challenge, on the front page of SCC's website and at the top of SCC's Facebook page, elicited nary a response from the organizations that were so eager to spread the offending rumors—rumors that have found their way into everything from [digital op-eds](#) to [serious news articles](#).

Antonia Okafor, Southwest regional director for SCC, commented, "It certainly came as no surprise to us that groups like [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) and [Gun Free UH](#) were nowhere to be found when it came time to substantiate the lies they'd been peddling. Casting baseless aspersions is easy until someone challenges you to prove them."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 04/11/2016

### **Students for Concealed Carry's Statement on the Murder at UT-Austin**

**AUSTIN, TX** – The recent murder of a female undergraduate on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin serves as a tragic reminder that college campuses, though typically safe, do play host to every form of violent crime found throughout the rest of society. No matter how much we want to believe that universities are safe spaces shielded from the dangers of the "real world," the truth is that the only thing separating most campuses from the rest of the world is a sidewalk. And as we saw at UT-Austin, that sidewalk can be crossed at any time, without warning.

Anti-campus carry activists who harp on the fact that college campuses are statistically very safe (typically on par with affluent neighborhoods in the same city) presuppose that a holder of a license to carry (LTC) a handgun should only carry a gun in places where violent crime is likely. However, like most reasonable people, LTC holders generally avoid places where violence is likely. They choose to carry handguns in case violence finds them some place where they had no reason to expect it, such as at a movie theater, a restaurant, or even a college campus.

The [trained, licensed, carefully screened](#) adults ([age 21 and above](#)) who regularly carry concealed handguns in presumably safe locations such as shopping malls, churches, libraries, museums, and even the Texas Capitol are the [same ones](#) who'll soon be authorized to carry concealed handguns on Texas college campuses. However, UT-Austin President Gregory Fenves and the university's campus carry policy working group have crafted [policies](#) that, in conflict with the intent of the [campus carry law](#) passed by the Texas Legislature, will leave LTC holders less able to defend themselves on the University of Texas campus than in [most other places](#) throughout the state.

Imagine that you're a 22-year-old woman walking back to your car after studying late at the UT library. As you reach for your car door, a man lunges from the shadows and grabs your other arm. Your adrenaline surges, and your mind goes to the concealed handgun tucked into your waistband. As the man twists your arm and tries to force you to the ground, your free hand grabs the gun. You draw it just as his free hand draws a knife from his pocket. You point the gun at your assailant, squeeze the trigger, and...**CLICK**. Per [UT-Austin's campus carry policy](#), your gun's chamber is empty. Even if you had an extra second to [chamber a round](#), you'd need both hands free to do so.

Now imagine that you're a female university employee walking through that same garage when a man with a knife steps out in front of you. Your first instinct is to reach for the secret handgun pocket built into the side of your purse, but it's empty. Because you're never sure when your job will require you to visit an office that the occupant has [declared](#) "gun-free," you're seldom able to carry your gun on campus. According to state law, you have the right to carry a concealed handgun on campus, but thanks to university policy, you enjoy that right in name only.

The recent tragedy at UT-Austin should serve as a wakeup call to university administrators who seek to handicap LTC holders on campus. Antonia Okafor, Southwest regional director for Students for Concealed Carry, commented, "The senselessness of this heinous crime reaffirms that we can't try to predict when and where violence will strike. For that reason, vetted, licensed adults should enjoy the same measure of personal protection on campus that they already enjoy virtually everywhere else."

*Student for Concealed Carry extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of the young woman murdered at UT-Austin. In deference to her family's statement that "the last thing she would want is to be the poster child for any cause," we have refrained from using her name in this release.*

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ABOUT STUDENTS FOR CONCEALED CARRY — [Students for Concealed Carry](#) (SCC) is a national, non-partisan, grassroots organization comprising college students, faculty, staff, and concerned citizens who believe that holders of state-issued concealed handgun licenses should be allowed the same measure of personal protection on college campuses that current laws afford them virtually everywhere else. SCC is not affiliated with the NRA or

any other organization. For more information on SCC, visit [ConcealedCampus.org](https://concealedcampus.org) or [Facebook.com/ConcealedCampus](https://facebook.com/ConcealedCampus). For more information on the debate over campus carry in Texas, visit [WhyCampusCarry.com](https://WhyCampusCarry.com).

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