



To: Governor of New Hampshire, Chris Sununu

May 1, 2018

We write to you in order to clarify our rationale for drafting and passing a Resolution in Support of Maintaining UNH's Current Firearms Policy (see attached), and to ask your consideration of the facts and positions enunciated therein.

This resolution reflects the Graduate Student Senate's awareness and support of the repeated testimony of Chief Paul Dean of the UNH Police Department to encourage the legislature to leave the current campus firearms policy intact.¹

This resolution also reflects the opinion of a Superior Court of New Hampshire in declaring that the University System of New Hampshire, as also the Community College System of New Hampshire, and all campuses maintained by those respective systems, do have autonomy under state law to determine policies relevant to the carrying of non-law-enforcement individuals of firearms on the premises of all campuses.

We appreciate your attention to the expert opinions of qualified members of the UNH Police Department, as well as that of the judiciary, and ask that you appreciate, as well, the studied opinions of this body representing graduate students at the University of New Hampshire.

Respectfully submitted,
Assembled Voting Membership
UNH Graduate Student Senate

cc:

Speaker of the NH House, Gene G. Chandler
NH House Majority Leader, Richard W. Hinch
NH House Minority Leader, Stephen Shurtleff
NH House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee Chair, David Welch
UNH Police Chief, Paul Dean

¹ Chief Dean has testified to the legislature annually in support of maintaining the present UNH firearms policy since 2012.



Resolution AY2017-2018.1, Passed March 13, 2018

A Resolution in Support of Maintaining UNH's Current Firearms Policy²

The following resolution is hereby adopted by the Graduate Student Senate of the University of New Hampshire in response to New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu's February 21, 2018 statement of support for "campus carry" legislation, HB1542, which was rejected in the New Hampshire legislature on February 22, 2018.

WHEREAS, the Graduate Student Senate is comprised of both instructors and students, who support and expect a safe, secure learning and working environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, in the past ten years, so called "mass shootings" or "rampage shootings" have increased in number and frequency, often in school environments, with all too frequently tragic outcomes; and

WHEREAS, recent empirical research³ supports the notion that right to carry legislation increases the risk of both accidental firearm mortality and intentional violent crime; and, similarly, the same data refutes previous, flawed data prescribing right to carry as a deterrent for wrongdoing, or that "gun free zones" attract violent crime; and

WHEREAS, college campuses are recognized as uniquely challenging law enforcement zones requiring specialized personnel, training, and rules, orchestrated and agreed upon between local law enforcement entities and campus administration, and further agreed upon by attending students via student handbooks and codes of ethics; and

WHEREAS, New Hampshire celebrates a long history of local control of issues important to their communities, recognizing that statewide policies do not consistently serve the public well in all instances; and

WHEREAS, in the establishment of the USNH and CCSNH systems⁴, it seems the clear intent of the state through the General Court to provide those systems with sufficient autonomy to encourage an environment conducive to education; and

² Policy: <https://www.usnh.edu/unh/iii-administrative-policies/j-firearms-campus>

³ Crifasi, C. K., Merrill-Francis, M., Webster, D. W., Wintemute, G. J., & Vernick, J. S. (2018). Changes in the legal environment and enforcement of firearm transfer laws in Pennsylvania and Maryland. *Injury Prevention: Journal Of The International Society For Child And Adolescent Injury Prevention*, doi:10.1136/injuryprev-2017-042582

⁴ RSA 187-A:16; RSA 188-F:6 (I, II)



WHEREAS, a Superior Court of New Hampshire held in 2012⁵ that both USNH and CCSNH systems, as well as all institutions within those systems, have the right to limit the carrying of firearms on their campuses to law-enforcement officers and for possible instructional purposes related to the educational missions of those institutions and systems; and,

WHEREAS, the passage in 2017 of RSA 159:6-III, establishing New Hampshire as a state in which persons not otherwise prohibited by statute need no permit to carry firearms openly or concealed, does not create any additional legal limitations on those institutions' and systems' rights pertaining thereto; and,

WHEREAS, the University of New Hampshire, including its administration, have proven their ability to provide the safest environment for learning as based on comparator institutions nationally⁶ while maintaining their current campus specific regulations¹ regarding firearms; and,

WHEREAS, students who legally and rightfully possess firearms in attendance at UNH maintain their second amendment right to possess their firearms without abridgement or unconstitutional seizure;

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the University of New Hampshire Graduate Student Senate strongly supports the New Hampshire legislature's rejection of HB1542, and encourages further rejection of proposed legislation in word or spirit similar to this bill; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate rejects Governor Sununu's fallacious claim that local control and autonomy at the University is ineffective and necessarily leads to the abridgment of Second Amendment rights or the general devolvement of governmental efficacy in the state.

Finally, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate:

- 1) Supports the current firearms policy at UNH as set by the UNH President, whose authority it is to do so by law, and rejects proposals, like HB1542, seeking to change the law that provides the UNH President said authority, and,
- 2) Supports the rights of all its constituents, but does not privilege any one right above and at the expense of all others, and,

⁵ *University System of New Hampshire v. Bradley Jardis, et al.*, Grafton Superior Court, Docket No. 215-2011-CV-00553 (2012).

⁶ Huddleston, Mark. "State of the University Address." 20 Feb. 2018.
<https://www.unh.edu/president/state-university-2018>



- 3) Supports the honorable and consistent efforts of the UNH Police Department in keeping our campus and our community secure and safe, and lastly,
- 4) Applauds and encourages cooperation and positive, trusting relationships between the administration, the NH legislature, the University Board of Trustees, and the University Systems Student Board that facilitate the adoption of appropriate and common sense measures that ensure the continued security and safety of all members of our community.