

Franklin Senate statement opposing HB 859 allowing concealed weapons on Georgia college campuses.

Dear members of the Georgia State Senate:

We write as the faculty governing body of the Franklin College of Arts and Science at the University of Georgia, the oldest and largest academic unit on campus. We are adamantly opposed to HB 859 -- the campus carry law -- and in expressing our opposition we join the University Chancellor, UGA President, and many individual faculty, staff, and students of UGA. In a 2014 poll of Georgia voters conducted by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 78 percent of Georgia voters opposed campus carry; only 20 percent supported it. Thousands of Georgia residents and Georgia college students, faculty, and staff have signed two different petitions against the campus carry law.

College campuses have many unique characteristics that mean the presence of guns, even lawful ones in the hands of those who are not trained law enforcement professionals, can pose a significant risk to students, staff, faculty, and even children and other visitors on campus.

We believe that a robust and open academic environment requires that all feel safe and free from intimidation and/or potential violence. If this legislation passes, and students and faculty are hesitant to discuss sensitive or controversial topics because of the presence of guns on campus and in our classrooms, the academic integrity of UGA will be greatly compromised. Guns in large, crowded, stadium style lecture halls would be particularly dangerous. The passage of this bill will also very likely prompt some faculty to look for employment in states without campus carry, and could encourage our best and most heavily recruited faculty to more strongly consider offers from other institutions of higher learning that do not allow concealed weapons on campus.

We urge all state Senators to represent the wishes of those living and working on Georgia college campuses, including UGA, by voting against this legislation.

Sincerely,
Franklin Faculty Senate

AJC article: <http://jaybookman.blog.myajc.com/2016/01/28/georgia-voters-overwhelmingly-oppose-campus-carry/>

Petitions: <https://www.change.org/p/georgia-state-house-keep-guns-off-uga-s-campus>

<https://www.change.org/p/georgia-state-house-keep-guns-off-of-georgia-tech-s-campus>