



Guns on Campus: Overview

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In the wake of several campus shootings, the most deadly being the 2007 shooting at Vir Tech University, states are considering legislation about whether or not to permit guns on college campuses. For some, these events point to a need to ease existing firearm regulations and allow concealed weapons on campuses. Others see the solution in tighter restrictions to keep guns off campuses.

In 2013, at least 19 states introduced legislation to allow concealed carry on campus in regard and in the 2014 legislative session, at least 14 states introduced similar legislation. In 2013, two bills passed, one in Kansas that allows concealed carry generally and one in Arkansas that allows faculty carry. The [Kansas legislation](#) creates a provision that colleges and universities cannot prohibit concealed carry unless a building has "adequate security measures." Governing boards of the institutions, however, may still request an exemption to prohibit for up to 4 years. [Arkansas' bill](#) allows faculty to carry, unless the governing board adopts a policy that expressly disallows faculty to carry. In 2015, Texas became the most recent state to allow concealed carry weapons on college campuses.

On the other hand, recent shootings also have encouraged some legislators to strengthen existing firearm regulations. In 2013, five states introduced legislation to prohibit concealed carry weapons on campus. None of these bills passed.

Concealed Carry Weapon Laws and College Campuses

All 50 states allow citizens to carry concealed weapons if they meet certain state requirements. Currently, there are 19 states that ban carrying a concealed weapon on a college campus: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wyoming.

In 23 states the decision to ban or allow concealed carry weapons on campuses is made by each college or university individually: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia.

Because of recent state legislation and court rulings, eight states now have provisions allowing the carrying of concealed weapons on public postsecondary campuses. These states are Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin. During the 2015 legislative session, Texas' legislature passed a bill permitting concealed carry on campus and making it the eighth state to permit guns on campus. The legislation will take effect in August 2016.

Utah remains the only state to have [statute specifically naming public colleges and universities](#) as public entities that not have the authority to ban concealed carry, and thus, all 10 public institutions in Utah allow concealed weapons on their property. Recently passed [Kansas legislation](#) creates a provision that colleges and universities cannot prohibit concealed carry unless a building has "adequate security measures." Governing boards of the institutions, however, still request an exemption to prohibit for up to four years. [Wisconsin legislation](#) creates a provision that colleges and universities must allow concealed carry on campus grounds. Campuses can, however, prohibit weapons from campus buildings if signs are posted at every entrance explicitly stating that weapons are prohibited. All University of Wisconsin system campuses and technical community college districts are said to be putting this signage in place. [Legislation passed in Mississippi](#) in 2011 creates an exception to allow concealed carry on college campuses for those who have taken a voluntary course on safe handling and use of firearms by a certified instructor.

Recent court cases have also overturned some long-standing systemwide bans of concealed carry on state college : university campuses. In March 2012, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado's [policy ban guns from campus violates the state's concealed carry law](#), and in 2011 the Oregon Court of Appeals [overturned the Oregon University System's ban of guns on campuses](#), allowing those with permits to carry concealed guns on the grounds of these public colleges (Oregon's State Board of Higher Education retained its authority to have internal po for certain areas of campus, and [adopted a new policy in 2012 that bans guns in campus buildings](#)). In both cases, it ruled that state law dictates only the legislature can regulate the use, sale and possession of firearms, and therefore these systems had overstepped their authority in issuing the bans. See the "[Guns on Campus: Campus Action](#)," pag more information on these rulings, board policies and other campuses that allow concealed carry on their grounds.

For up-to-date information on legislation, see the [Education Bill Tracking Database](#). Search under the topic "Postsecondary - Campus Safety."

Additional Resources

- [Guns on Campus: Campus Action](#)
- [Guns on Campus: Resources](#)
- [NCSL Education homepage](#)
- [Education Bill Tracking Database](#)

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