

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee, for the record my name is Peter Noordijk. I live in House District 44, Portland. I am testifying in support of HB 3114 on behalf of Ceasefire Oregon. Thank-you for allowing me to testify.

I am here to testify in support of HB 3114 in order to preserve the ability of public colleges and universities to maintain a safe community for student education.

Adding weapons to campus life would undermine student experiences in a number of important ways that harms the public interest. One, increasing access to firearm would expose students to greater violent crime from their peers. Two, it would put students at greater risk of suicide and the associated trauma to the community. Three, it would undermine the ability of faculty to ensure a safe space for open exploration of challenging subjects; finally, four, it puts faculty at increased risk of violent reprisal from students.

I am an adjunct professor of Political Science at Mt. Hood Community College and I have 7 years experience teaching at Oregon universities and colleges. In my classrooms we frequently engage in discussion on challenging topics that require an atmosphere safe for disagreement. Arming students or faculty would horribly undermine conditions for safe honest discussion among students with divergent opinions and life experience in my classroom.

Despite being an environment full of stressors, colleges and universities currently provide an environment for students that is far safer from gun violence than that of their un-enrolled peers. A 2001 Department of Education report estimated homicide rates among students on campus at .07 per 100,000. compared to their co-aged peers in the general population who suffered homicides at 200 times that rate; 14 per 100,000 (The Incidence of Crime on the Campuses of U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions 2001). A Bureau of Justice Statistics Report covering 1995-2002 noted that 92.9% of violent crimes against students, including the 42,810 with firearms each year, occurred off-campus-- meaning that gun-free campuses have been a relatively safe place for young adults to live and learn (Baum and Klaus 2005).

I am an expert at teaching, not campus firearms policies. However, I am not alone in opposing legislative efforts to undermine campus safety and local control. A 2008 survey of 417 campus police chiefs found that fully 97% of colleges responding had a firearms prohibition in place. Only 5% of chiefs disagreed with the observation that a ban is the best means of controlling gun violence. Also, only 5% of chiefs believed that permitting concealed weapons might help in reducing campus killings (Thompson, Price, Mrdjenovich and Khubchandani 2009).

Public safety professionals support an on-campus weapons ban for public universities. In addition to protecting students from each other, weapons bans appear to protect students from self-harm. Schwartz's major recent study of student suicide rates notes that student suicide rates are half that of their co-aged peers; the author attributes all of the difference to the nine-fold reduction to access to firearms at their on campus

residence. Suicide rates by other means are comparable between on-campus student communities and off-campus peers (Schwartz 2011).

Personally I have only faced threatening behavior in the classroom twice. One directed at me after an exam, another by a student who responded inappropriately in discussion. Both resolved without incident. In the recent past however, colleagues have been threatened, assaulted, or stalked by students. Fortunately, none so far have lost their tempers with an available firearm. Let's keep it that way.

Please support HB 3114 to preserve campus environments that are safe for learning and growth.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Noordijk

Bibliography

- , Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2005. Violent Victimization of College Students, 1995-2002. Department of Justice
- , Policy U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, Planning, Innovation. 2001. The Incidence of Crime on the Campuses of U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions.
- Schwartz, Allan J. (2011) Rate, Relative Risk, and Method of Suicide by Students at 4-Year Colleges and Universities in the United States, 2004-2005 through 2008-2009. *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior* 41:353-371.
- Thompson, Amy, James H. Price, Adam J. Mrdjenovich, and Jagdish Khubchandani. (2009) Reducing Firearm-Related Violence on College Campuses, Police Chiefs' Perceptions and Practices. *Journal of American College Health* 58:247-254.