

Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 3114 and in Opposition to House Bill 3009

Dear Chairman Dembrow and committee members,

I am Sarah Finger McDonald. I live in Corvallis, Oregon. I teach at Oregon State University and I went to Virginia Tech. I support House Bill 3114 and I am adamantly against House Bill 3009.

When I was talking about coming to testify about these bills with my daughter's babysitter, an OSU student, she looked at me with a shocked expression on her face and said "People can bring guns on campus? That does not make me feel safe!" Another OSU student, a young man who took one of the courses I teach, came to talk to me about gun safety legislation. He said he is a gun owner and a sport shooter but he knows he is not trained to handle a crisis situation and he sees no reason to carry a gun on campus.

The students who survived the Virginia Tech shooting and the parents of the victims have not become advocates for guns on campus. Rather, they have used their experience to push for stricter gun regulations. Virginia Tech did not respond to the shooting by arming their faculty and students. They established the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention. The first leader of the Center was Dr. Jerzy Nowak who was the Head of the Horticulture department where I got my degree. His wife, Jocelyne Couture-Nowak was a French instructor and was killed in room 211 of Norris Hall along with 11 of her students.

We should learn from the community of Virginia Tech. They did not respond to the massacre on their campus by arming people, they built an institute dedicated to studying the causes of and finding solutions to violence.

Section 2.2 of Virginia Tech's Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy bars the carrying, maintenance and storage of weapons in university facilities.

2.2 Prohibition of Weapons

The university's employees, students, and volunteers, or any visitor or other third party attending a sporting, entertainment, or educational event, or visiting an academic or administrative office building, dining facility, or residence hall, are further prohibited from carrying, maintaining, or storing a firearm or weapon on any university facility, even if the owner has a valid permit, when it is not required by the individual's job, or in accordance with the relevant University Policies for Student Life. This prohibition applies to all events on campus where people congregate in any public or outdoor areas.

Any such individual who is reported or discovered to possess a firearm or weapon on university property will be asked to remove it immediately. Failure to comply may result in a student conduct referral and/or arrest, or an employee disciplinary action and/or arrest.

-Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Policy and Procedures No. 5616 Rev.: 7

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Subject: Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

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<http://www.policies.vt.edu/5616.pdf>

This policy looks much like the prohibition that House Bill 3114 would allow public universities in Oregon to enact.

Dana Schrad, the executive director of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, said after the shooting at Virginia Tech, "I have my own concerns that, had there been a number of people who had been in that classroom with guns, [there could have been] additional persons killed just as a result of poor judgment calls." (Flesher and Marks, 2007). In a 2009 poll, 86% of campus police chiefs polled said they disagree or strongly disagree that allowing students to carry concealed weapons on campus would prevent some or all campus killings (Thompson et al., p. 250).

Students and faculty and members of the public are not trained to deal with security crises. They could escalate situations or use a gun in a situation where it was not needed. Trained police officers hit their intended targets about 20% of the time (Morrison, pp.331-332). Untrained people would do far worse in a highly stressful situation. More, not fewer, people would be killed in a shooting incident if an untrained person engaged a shooter. With armed people on campus security would not be able to tell if an armed person was a threat and issue a lock-down advisory before an incident occurred or to determine who the aggressor was in a shooting incident once it has started.

The reality is that despite the horrific shooting at Virginia Tech, college campuses are far safer than the communities that surround them. I, and my students and colleagues, feel safe on campus. The vast majority of violence against college students (93%) occurs off campus where guns are widely available (Baum and Klaus, p.5). To prevent future mass shootings and other gun violence on campus, we should reject House Bill 3009 and not allow Concealed Weapon License holders to carry guns on campus. We should strengthen our gun laws to make sure people who are a danger to themselves and others do not have access to dangerous weapons.

House Bill 3114 gives public universities the right to restrict or prohibit firearms from campus. I certainly hope that our universities choose to make their campuses safer by prohibiting guns from being brought onto campus. But first our public universities must be given the right to choose how they address guns on campus.

We must remember students like my daughter's babysitter whose immediate response to learning that a bill is being considered that would allow people to carry guns on campus was to say "That doesn't make me feel safe." We must remember students like Colin Goddard, who was in room 211 of Norris hall at Virginia Tech, and has become a crusader against guns on campus. We must remember John Woods, whose girlfriend, Maxine Turner, was killed at Virginia Tech and is fighting for regulations that would keep guns off college campuses. Mr. Woods said at a recent rally, "None of the survivors I have spoken to believes there should be guns on campus. We live in a tyranny of guns, and we're asking for gun sense, not nonsense. We will prevail."

Please support safe college campuses and reject House Bill 3009 and vote in support of House Bill 3114. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

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