



January 26, 2023

Chairman Todd Porter
House Energy and Natural Resources
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

Re: Testimony in support of House Bill 1404 relating to carrying a concealed firearm on a college campus

Dear Chairman Porter,

On behalf of our members, I am submitting to you today my written testimony in support of House Bill 1404 and to ask that the members of this committee vote favorably on this bill.

House Bill 1404 amends North Dakota law to recognise the right of an individual, not otherwise prohibited, to carry a concealed firearm, dangerous weapon, or self-defense pepper spray on a college or university campus, and to prohibit the state board of higher education from denying such individuals the right to do so.

Laws which deny individuals their right to keep and bear arms under the guise of public safety are a blatant violation of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Second Amendment protects “the right of the people to keep and bear arms”--regardless of whether the government thinks it a good idea to ban firearms from certain locations.

Our lives are a gift from our Creator. And as part of this gift, humanity has been endowed with certain rights, including the right to life. The right to life means that individuals have the right to take the necessary actions for the support, development, and well-being of their own life. Moreover, it means that one has the right to self-ownership, self-sustenance, self-government, self-preservation, and self-defence. These inherently interwoven principles also naturally imply that our rights serve as a legal barrier, protecting individuals from the infringements of others. This timeless truth is the same regardless of whether the infringing misconduct is instigated by a lawless individual or by the actions of an unjust government.

As obvious gifts from the Creator, these individual rights are therefore inalienable — a term that means “not capable of being taken away or denied” as well as “not transferable to any other.” Thus, a government cannot strip away the right to keep and bear arms simply because it thinks it is too dangerous. A fact acknowledged by the Supreme Court of the United States in *McDonald v. Chicago*, “the right to keep and bear arms... is not the only constitutional right that has controversial public safety implications.”

Currently, North Dakota, along with many other states, prohibits the possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon on a college campus, denying the God-given rights of many North Dakotans, and creating dangerous “gun-free zones.” Unfortunately, all too often, these gun free zones are really nothing more than criminal safe zones. And laws which prohibit the right to keep and bear arms for self-defence virtually guarantee that the only person armed at the scene of an attack will be the criminal.

There are many who argue against the carrying of firearms on a college campus, stating that it is simply too dangerous and will do more harm than good. But we must not fail to remember that the Second Amendment protects the liberties of *all* Americans; and in a truly free society, individuals will, at times, conduct themselves in an unfortunate manner. Hence, Thomas Jefferson’s preference for the “tempestuous seas of liberty” over the “calm of despotism.”

House Bill 1404 will not only address the safety and self-protection issues created by gun free zones, but will also restore the rights to so many who live, work and visit the college campuses of North Dakota.

That is why, on behalf of our members, Gun Owners of America supports House Bill 1404, and I urge the committee to vote favorably on this bill.

Sincerely,

Iain Graeme
Rocky Mountain & Great Plains Region Director
Gun Owners of America