

**Testimony: HB 1588**  
**Senate Judiciary**  
**Monday March 31, 2025; 2:30 PM**

**My name is Lloyd Halvorson, I am the VP for Academic and Student Affairs at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake. In addition to my role as the VP, I serve as the college's Chief of Police. I have been a licensed peace officer in the State of ND for 36 years. After a decade with the Bismarck Police Department, I joined Lake Region State College in 2002 as the police academy director and law enforcement educator. In addition, I have been a ND POST approved firearms instructor for the past 21 years.**

**I am here to testify to that portion of the current statute 62.1-02-05 (1) (c) that prohibits the possession of firearms in "A publicly owned or operated building". I testify today on behalf of Lake Region State College and communicate to this committee the college's official position.**

**NDUS attorneys tell us that the reason firearms are prohibited on our college campuses is because firearms are currently prohibited in all publicly owned or operated buildings. They tell us that we do not fall under the provision prohibiting firearms at "schools or school sponsored events" (page 2 line 27 of this bill) as that refers to K-12.**

**At the hearing in the House in early February, I testified against removing "A publicly owned or operated building" from this statute unless a "carve out" was created for the NDUS higher education campuses. The committee agreed to that and wrote that in as 1 (d) of this bill (page 3 lines 1, 2 and 3).**

**If there were any changes made to this piece of legislation where firearms would be allowed on the NDUS campuses, it would create an environment where it would be perfectly legal for almost anyone to possess a rifle, including a semi-automatic "assault style" rifle, shotgun, and/or handgun open carry (completely visible) and/or concealed (completely hidden) in all campus buildings, including residence halls, classrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, student unions, dining centers, auditoriums, and sports arenas; and in all circumstances on campus such as athletic events and graduation ceremonies. This would all be in a "constitutional carry" environment, where no permit is required.**

**Being able to openly carry firearms on our campus in this way is highly problematic. From a protection standpoint under the law today: If someone emerged into the doorway of a crowded college event (think basketball game) carrying an assault rifle or a handgun, a police officer on scene would know what to do. The officer would not need to wait for this**

**individual to point the weapon at a person, the crowd, or to open fire, as the possession of the firearm is unlawful in and of itself.**

**If the law were changed, the officer would not be able to proactively respond (engage/detain) as the law would make it legally permissible to bring an assault rifle into this event. It would even be legal to walk around with a handgun in your hand. We cannot require our police officers to wait until someone opens fire or otherwise shows a readiness to kill or terrorize before they are allowed to confront, engage, and detain. If it were to become legal for someone to possess firearms in “*publicly owned or operated buildings*” the distinction between lawful behavior and seriously alarming behavior will become very subjective.**

**I sincerely hope you will give the provision removing “*A publicly owned or operated building*” additional scrutiny and give the open carry and concealed carry of firearms the important deliberation it deserves.**

**It is my professional opinion, as a higher education and law enforcement leader for 3 1/2 decades, that a majority of North Dakotans, gun-owning and law-abiding North Dakotans, would, without hesitation, reject a reality where it would legally permissible to carry all types of firearms, in all manner of carry, in virtually all public places.**

**Lake Region State College encourages this committee to ensure this bill either remains as it is or is changed only to allow the current legal status quo to remain.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.**

**Lloyd Halvorson, Vice President  
Academic and Student Affairs &  
Chief of Police**

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