

Testimony Against HB 1793-FN:

“AN ACT prohibiting public colleges and universities from regulating the possession or carrying of firearms and non-lethal weapons on campus.”

Rep. Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 10); January 14, 2025
House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee

College and universities have the same natural rights as any other organization to defend the safety of the human beings on their premises. That includes the right to restrict the use of weapons on campus, or even to forbid the possession of weapons altogether. Educational institutions can even let some people (e.g. campus police) have weapons but not everyone.

I live in a college town. The University of New Hampshire is very similar to Virginia Tech, where the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history took place in 2007, when a student killed 32 people before committing suicide. Sadly, it has not been the last. Some of those shootings have taken place on campuses where “campus carry” is allowed.

The assassination of Charlie Kirk took place on a college campus. Utah Valley University allows “campus carry”, thanks to a Utah law similar to HB 1793. UVU was not a gun free zone. Kirk’s murderer was able to conceal-carry a rifle onto campus, shoot Kirk from a rooftop, and escape without any of the law-abiding citizens in the vicinity being able to return fire. He actually escaped unharmed and was caught a day after the fact, when he voluntarily turned himself in to the police in his hometown, 300 miles from campus. Utah’s campus-carry laws did nothing to prevent that tragedy, and arguably made it easier for the gunman to commit his crime.

The gunman was a typical campus shooter in most respects. He was a young man who was going to college. He was attending another college, not UVU, but a gun ban on his own campus would still have reduced the chances of him becoming a college shooter.

The current gun rules at UNH have worked well. Events on other campuses show the rules are not 100% effective but they’re better than nothing. Much better!

I urge the committee to vote “Inexpedient to Legislate” on HB 1793.