



January 13, 2026

House Committee on Criminal Justice

Dear Chairman Roy and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

I write this letter on behalf of the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH), as both a career law enforcement professional in New Hampshire and a long-time member of the CCSNH Board of Trustees, asking that you veto House Bill 1793. By negating existing campus prohibitions on firearms, this bill would jeopardize the safety of students, staff, and guests on the public college campuses in the state.

The safety of our campuses has always been of paramount importance to me as the law enforcement representative on the CCSNH Board of Trustees. I am proud of our record of ensuring the campuses are safe places for our students to grow and for our faculty and staff to work. We believe this success is largely attributable to the fact that the vast majority of colleges and universities have policies that prohibit the possession of firearms on campus.

Thousands of students who live and study on New Hampshire's public college campuses are young and continuing to mature, while coping with a myriad of stresses. We know from national studies that anxiety and depression are growing concerns among college populations across the country, sometimes untreated, and sometimes self-treated with alcohol and other drugs that can contribute to extreme reactions to personal distress. Access to firearms in these situations would create daily risks to the campus community. There is no credible evidence to suggest that students carrying firearms would reduce violence on our college campuses, but we can easily see how introducing firearms into this environment would jeopardize the lives of students, employees, visitors, and law enforcement.

We are also concerned about issues that arise from the presence of childcare centers in our facilities, and our need to comply with Administrative Rules for childcare centers requiring storing and locking firearms and ammunition. There are five licensed childcare programs on CCSNH campuses, some stand-alone but others that are within classroom buildings, sharing hallways and other spaces. We also have an embedded high school (the public charter school, Spark Academy) on one of our campuses, and all seven of our colleges offer dual enrollment courses and youth camps that bring high school and middle school students to our campuses. We would need clarity on what, if any weapons-related requirements attach to these circumstances.

Shootings such as those that attract national attention are tragic. In the universe of gun violence, however, these events are very rare. By contrast, the dangers that would be present every day from the presence of firearms, in dormitories, classrooms, and common areas is of great concern.

A Resident Assistant in a dorm, or a faculty member in a classroom, should not come to work every day fearing for their safety should a confrontational situation arise. A student should not be afraid that a conflict could escalate through access to a deadly weapon.

As our fiscal note indicates, we would also expect this bill would increase costs for our campuses related to staffing, higher liability insurance rates, the installation of gun safes, and newfound litigation risk.

My opposition reflects decades of service in law enforcement in New Hampshire. I believe our policies strike the appropriate balance for our communities, and experience has shown they have worked for our campuses. We would request that you recommend HB1793 inexpedient to legislate and maintain the existing authority of the trustees to regulate this issue to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, the safety of our public institutions of higher education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Stevens", with a stylized, cursive flourish extending from the end.

John Stevens
Board of Trustees
Community College System of New Hampshire