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GUN-FREE UT: POLITICIANS MUST FOLLOW PROCESS OUTLINED IN SB11 ALLOWING UNIVERSITIES TO DECIDE WHERE GUNS BELONG ON CAMPUS

AUSTIN, TX, November 25, 2015 -- Following a unanimous vote by UT-Austin's Faculty Council to oppose concealed firearms in classrooms and other educational spaces, Sen. Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury), lead author of SB11, has asked Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to review key aspects of the law. At stake is whether public university presidents around Texas may designate many, if not most, campus buildings as gun-free.

"The law is clear; Sen. Birdwell wrote it," says Bryan D. Jones, the J.J. "Jake" Pickle Chair in Congressional Studies at UT-Austin and a prominent member of [Gun-Free UT](#). "He and the under-indictment Attorney General should follow the processes set out in the law, as well as those governing the university."

Known as Campus Carry, SB11 requires public universities to allow concealed firearms into buildings, grounds and transport vehicles. In a letter to the Attorney General, Birdwell claims that the law was written to allow concealed handguns "everywhere" on campus, and asks Paxton to issue an opinion on how universities should implement the law in advance of their own determinations.

As written, the law requires university presidents to consult "with students, staff, and faculty" to establish "reasonable rules, regulations, or other provisions" for bringing concealed firearms on campuses, as long as those rules don't "generally prohibit or have the effect of generally prohibiting" license holders from carrying concealed guns on campus. University Presidents or CEOs must also consider "the nature of the student population, specific safety considerations, and the uniqueness of the campus environment."

In recent weeks, legal experts and politicians have weighed in on this issue and determined that the law, as written, gives university presidents wide latitude in determining

which campus buildings can be gun-free zones. This latitude was, in fact, an eleventh-hour addition that allowed the law to pass.

A [memorandum](#) produced by legal counsel for Gun-Free UT notes that legal precedents don't equate partial or complete restrictions of guns in academic buildings with a general prohibition on guns. The memo also notes that the University's Handbook of Operating Procedures mandates that "policies pertaining to the general academic and welfare [of the university] must be approved by the University's Faculty Council or its General Faculty, or both."

"No constituency of the University wants guns in university buildings," says Max Snodderly, professor of Neuroscience and Nutritional Sciences at UT-Austin. "Students don't want them, faculty don't want them, staff don't want them, and parents don't want them. The president and the chancellor don't want them. Who exactly does Birdwell represent?"

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[Gun-Free UT](#) is a broad coalition of faculty, students, staff, parents and alumni opposed to allowing guns in campus buildings. Since its founding in August 2015, Gun-Free UT has become a statewide movement, garnering national and international attention. Thousands at UT campuses from El Paso to the Rio Grande Valley to Tyler have joined in to fight to keep concealed firearms out of dorms, classrooms and offices. For more information on Gun-FreeUT's legal position, click [here](#).