

For Immediate Release

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UT-Austin Graduate and Professional Students Declare Opposition to Guns in Classrooms

Austin, TX, December 1, 2015 – [1,787 graduate and professional students](#) from 132 programs in 18 Colleges and Schools at the University of Texas at Austin have signed a petition stating their opposition to SB 11 and sent an open letter to President Fennes and the Board of Regents.

SB 11, also known as “Campus Carry,” will allow concealed handgun license (CHL) holders to carry guns into campus buildings – including classrooms and offices – unless UT-Austin President Gregory Fennes designates them as “exclusion zones.” The [online petition](#) will be delivered to President Fennes and the Board of Regents today. Campus Carry is slated to take effect on August 1, 2016.

The graduate students are among the latest University groups to take a public stand against concealed firearms in classrooms and offices, joining more than [1,500 professors](#) and [100 UT staff members](#) in their opposition. In addition, [39 academic departments](#) at the University have released statements opposing SB 11.

Among the latest departments to protest the law is the Department of Chemical Engineering. [In their statement](#), members of the department note that, “We believe that guns in classrooms, laboratories, faculty/advising offices, and collaboration spaces would be unsafe and stifle the free exchange of ideas central to a world-class university...We also fear that SB11 may damage our ability to recruit and retain the most capable students, faculty and staff.”

Also taking an official position against SB11 are [29 American Scholarly Societies](#). Their combined statement notes that, “Our societies are concerned that the Campus Carry law [in Texas] and similar laws in other states introduce serious safety threats on college campuses with a resulting harmful effect on students and professors.”

In addition, 40 national professional associations have published statements opposing Texas’ Campus Carry law. The American Association of University Professors, the American Federation of Teachers, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [issued a joint statement](#) denouncing SB 11.

The UT-Austin [Graduate Student Petition](#) is affiliated with [Gun-Free UT](#), a broad coalition of faculty, staff, students, parents and alumni of the University of Texas-Austin who are opposed to guns on campus and in campus buildings. [Gun-Free UT's petition](#) on change.org has collected more than 8,400 signatures.

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