



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Andy Beshear
Governor

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Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
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Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.
President

March 9, 2023

Dear Kentucky Legislators,

We are writing on behalf of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and the commonwealth's public colleges and universities to express our opposition to House Bill 542, which would allow concealed weapons to be carried on the campuses of higher education institutions.

The higher education community prioritizes the health and safety of our students above all else. Our public college and university chiefs of police are unanimous in their professional judgment that any law or policy that increases the prevalence of deadly weapons on campus makes those places where our friends and families go to work, attend school, and enjoy community with each other much less safe. Our campus police forces train the community to call police immediately when a weapon is seen in any circumstance as there is currently no question as to the legality of possession when on campus grounds. In addition, considering the student mental health crisis we are now experiencing, we are concerned that an increased presence of guns could lead to higher rates of violence and suicide. When a gun is readily available, a suicide attempt can become significantly more lethal.

We are unaware of any reliable statistical evidence that shows that students, faculty, and staff carrying guns, particularly concealed handguns, reduces violence on college campuses.

We respect the Second Amendment and all the rights that it affords. However, college campuses play a unique role in our communities and should be afforded special protections. For our colleges and universities to fulfill their goal of educating our future workforce in an environment where ideas are freely exchanged, students must feel that campuses are generally safe from violence. Right now, they are.

Our higher education faculty and staff work hard to create a welcoming, secure environment on campus. Campus facilities must remain safe havens for students to focus on learning and the college experience, and any legislation that allows concealed weapons on campuses threatens students' real and perceived safety.

Multiple institutions also have significant health care campuses – with hospitals and clinics. Introducing guns into that environment further threatens the safety of staff, patients, and visitors.

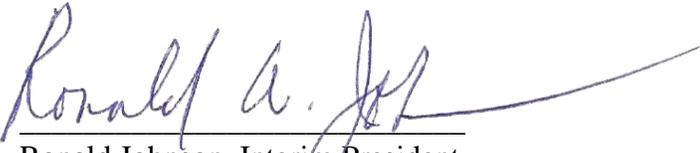
We respectfully ask for your consideration of our safety concerns in this matter. Please vote no on House Bill 542.



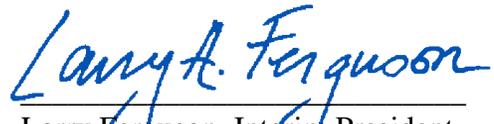
Aaron, Thompson, President
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education



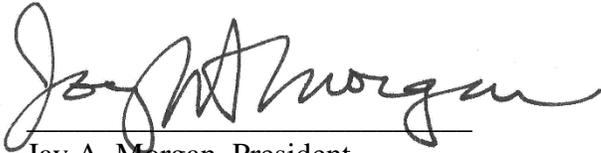
David McFaddin, President
Eastern Kentucky University



Ronald Johnson, Interim President
Kentucky State University



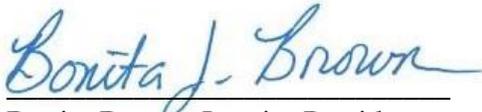
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Kentucky Community and Technical
College System



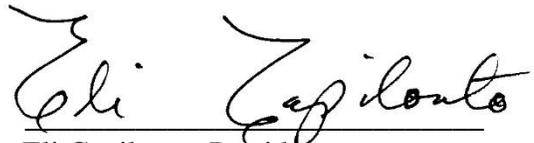
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