The University of Georgia

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Franklin Senate Statement Opposing HB 859 Allowing Concealed Weapons on Georgia College Campuses (March 15, 2016)

Dear Governor Deal:

We write as the faculty governing body of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia (UGA), the oldest and largest academic unit on campus. We are adamantly opposed to HB 859 -- the campus carry law -- and in expressing our opposition we join the University Chancellor, UGA President, campus police, and many individual faculty, staff, and students of UGA.

As you are aware, college campuses have many unique characteristics that mean the presence of guns, even lawful ones, in the hands of those who are not trained law enforcement professionals can pose a significant risk to students, staff, faculty, and even children [including young children attending on-campus daycare and high school students dually enrolled in college courses] and visitors on campus.

Furthermore, we believe that a robust and open academic environment requires that all feel safe and free from intimidation and/or potential violence. If this legislation is enacted, and students and faculty are hesitant to discuss sensitive or controversial topics because of the presence of guns on campus and in our classrooms, the academic integrity of UGA will be greatly compromised. Guns in large, crowded, stadium style lecture halls would be particularly dangerous. The passage of this bill will also very likely prompt some faculty to look for employment in states without campus carry, and could encourage our best and most heavily recruited faculty to more strongly consider offers from other institutions of higher learning that do not allow concealed weapons on campus.

In our view, the modifications proposed in your March 14th statement are insufficient; the only acceptable modification is that all Georgia colleges and universities be able to "opt out" of campus carry if administrative and faculty bodies deem that as appropriate for their campuses. We urge you to represent the wishes of those living and working on Georgia college campuses, including UGA, by vetoing this legislation.

Sincerely,

The University of Georgia Franklin College Faculty Senate