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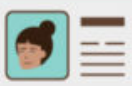





COLUMNS

Dispelling the misconceptions about campus carry

By Jorden Smith | August 17, 2016

Checklist for getting a License to Carry in Texas

<p>Turn 21 or be active military</p>	 <p>Submit online application</p>	 <p>Set up & pay for fingerprinting appointment at one of the two Houston locations</p>
 <p>Have a driver's license or state ID</p>		<p>Complete classroom training with state-certified LTC instructor.</p> 
<p>Pass written exam and shooting proficiency demonstration with LTC instructor</p>		 <p>Pay \$140 fee (discounts for veterans and others)</p>

Leah Nash/The Cougar

On August 1, after months of debate and protest, **campus carry** (SB11) finally went into effect on college campuses across the state, including **our own**.

Although nothing has happened since campus carry has been implemented, the new semester will bring a horde of students to campus soon. Some of these students will be legally carrying a firearm, which will unnecessarily worry some students.

I want to take this chance to dispel some of the myths surrounding campus carry as perpetuated by some interviews in The Cougar's **Bullet Points** series, and why I think it's a good idea.

First off, not everyone can get a concealed handgun license (CHL). The government isn't giving out handgun licenses like t-shirts on the first week of school. For some reason, people seem to think that 18-year-olds can get a gun.

You must be at least 21 years old or an active part of the military to even apply for a CHL. Along with that, you cannot have committed any felonies or particular misdemeanors, and you have to be an individual of sound mind. Applicants must also complete a six hour course, a written test and a shooting test to ensure those obtaining CHLs are able to handle the responsibility of carrying a handgun.

The people who hold CHLs aren't getting them to shoot people, rather, they're getting CHLs to protect themselves and others. Young adults only made up about 3 percent of all **CHL-approved licensees** in 2015.

There seems to be this idea being perpetuated by those who don't like campus carry that allowing CHL holders to carry on campus somehow puts student and staff lives in danger. Allow me to say, that is incomprehensibly ridiculous.

Over the past year, two professors have been killed in their offices.

One was at the hand of an unstable colleague who was also connected to another murder, and ultimately ended up killing himself after being on the run.

The **second incident** is the murder-suicide that took place at the University of California, Los Angeles earlier this summer. This was not a student upset with grades; he was upset about possible stolen code. Not only had the shooter been making comments about the professor (an obvious warning sign), but he also had a kill list. This is not someone who would pass the CHL application process.

Let's stop equating CHL holders to killers.

Along with that, there seem to be those who believe that allowing campus carry will create problems for minorities as those with guns will be able to do them harm.

Let me say this again – stop equating law-abiding CHL holders to the people that mean to do harm. UH is one of the most diverse campuses in the nation. People at UH protect and care for one another. CHL holders aren't seeking out minorities on campus. That way of thinking is just ridiculous. And, if people are so worried about being targeted by those who have a CHL, go get one for yourself. That is your right.

CHLs are for the protection of you and others, so that when police can't be there, you are.

CHL holders are not here to harm. The people who are CHL holders and will be bringing guns to campus to protect their lives and the lives of their fellow Coogs. That is the only intention of campus carry.

Now, there are complaints that those with CHLs don't actually stop crimes. In news, there's an old saying: "If it doesn't bleed, it doesn't lead."

Those who legally carry firearms stop crimes all the time. There's a **story** from April 2015 about an Uber driver stopping a potential mass shooting. In **2002**, two law students at the Appalachian School of Law stopped a shooter. They would've stopped him sooner if it hadn't been for a Gun-Free Zone, which the shooter surprisingly ignored. Good guys stop the bad guys all the time. You just don't hear about it because it's not juicy.

As someone who has friends that are CHL holders, I honestly can say that campus feels safer because they are allowed to carry on campus. There's a lot of misinformation surrounding this change in policy, and there are those who are trying to perpetuate the idea that CHL holders are gun nuts.

Let's start this school year informed and with an understanding of how our campus has changed. As the new school year starts, remember, the good guys with guns are here to keep you safe.

Opinion columnist Jorden Smith is a political science junior and the president of the College Republicans. He can be reached at opinion@thedailycougar.com

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