

NAACP NEWS

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Georgia NAACP Strongly Opposes “Campus Carry” Bill

Student Safety put at Risk by Legislative Attempt to Allow Concealed Firearms on College Campuses

ATLANTA – The Georgia NAACP announces its strong opposition to House Bill 859 approved by the Georgia House of Representatives on Monday. “This legislation, sponsored by Rick Jasperse (R-Jasper), allows concealed weapons on college campuses and in turn places students in greater danger of violence while in pursuit of a higher degree of education”, said Francys Johnson, Statesboro Attorney and Georgia NAACP President. House Bill 859 is not supported by the Board of Regents and will force college and university administrators to allow any Georgia license holder to carry firearms and weapons on property owned by or leased to any public institution of post-secondary school.

In response to the bill’s passage in the State House, Georgia NAACP Youth and College leaders expressed unequivocal opposition as the bill advances to the senate. “H.B. 859 plays into the fears of everyday Georgians by suggesting that they are unsafe on our college campuses,” said Georgia NAACP Youth & College President James “Major” Woodall, a senior at Georgia Southern University. “If we are to truly evaluate the climate on campuses across the state, crime is at significantly low levels. Allowing firearms on campus does nothing but add to the risk of violence. Concealed firearm possession on campuses does not guarantee anyone’s safety – not even my own”, said Woodall.

Georgia’s Board of Regents have blocked previous efforts to permit the concealed carrying of firearms on its Georgia campuses including a 2014 legislation known as the “Guns Everywhere” bill. The Senate voted to take the campus carry provision out of the bill before it ultimately passed.

“Seventy-eight percent of Georgians do not want this bill to pass. Student government presidents have voted against this idea. University presidents and the University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents have also expressed strong disinterest in such an act. To have this still being pushed through the halls of our state legislature is beyond outrageous,” said Woodall.

The bill has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Georgia NAACP plans to be represented when the bill is heard at the committee hearing. Leaders of the organization encourage all Georgians to contact their local representative to express displeasure in H.B. 859, and to contact Lt. Governor Casey Cagle and Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer to prevent this bill from making it to the Senate Floor.

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Founded in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights organization. The Georgia NAACP has had an unbroken presence in Georgia since 1917. The Georgia NAACP maintains a network of branches throughout Georgia, from cities to small rural counties. The Georgia NAACP has been the most effective and consistent advocates for civil and human rights in Georgia.

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