

KNOW YOUR IX

Empowering students to stop sexual violence

Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla
406 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

February 10, 2016

RE: Thank You for Supporting Student Survivors and Opposing H.B. 4001 and S.B. 68

Dear Senator Diaz de la Portilla:

On behalf of [Know Your IX](#), which works directly with students who have experienced sexual violence on campus, I write to commend you for your courage and steadfast commitment to student safety in opposing Florida H.B. 4001 and S.B. 68. As the head of the largest national network of student activists working on the issue of campus sexual assault, I can say with confidence that allowing students to carry concealed weapons on campuses would have dangerous and potentially fatal consequences for Florida students, particularly for women and other marginalized students.

Sexual and dating violence is pervasive on college campuses: One in five women will be sexually assaulted while in college¹ and 32 percent of female students report having been abused by a dating partner.² Guns are the most common weapons used in the murders of intimate partners,³ and students who carry weapons on campus are more likely to be perpetrators of physical and sexual violence at college than those who do not.⁴ The Florida Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board found that the majority of domestic violence homicides from 2006 to 2012 were committed with a gun.⁵ The widespread use of alcohol and other drugs on college campuses would only compound the danger of gun carriers to potential victims and unwitting bystanders. In sum, lifting campus gun bans will endanger students—particularly those in abusive relationships—and could cost Florida students their lives.

¹ See LYNN LANGTON & SOFI SINOZICH, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMIZATION AMONG COLLEGE-AGED FEMALES, 1995-2013 (Dec. 2014), <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsavcaf9513.pdf>.

² See generally CHRISTINE SELLERS & MAX BROMLEY, VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN COLLEGE STUDENT DATING RELATIONSHIPS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CAMPUS SERVICE PROVIDERS, JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY JUSTICE 17 (1996).

³ ARKADI GERNEY & CHELSEA PARSONS, WOMEN UNDER THE GUN: HOW GUN VIOLENCE AFFECTS WOMEN AND 4 POLICY SOLUTIONS TO BETTER PROTECT THEM, Center for American Progress (2014), <http://ampr.gs/1MPkQrp>.

⁴ MATTHEW MILLER, DAVID HEMENWAY & HENRY WECHSLER, GUNS AND GUN THREATS AT COLLEGE, JOURNAL OF AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH 50.2 1 (2002), <http://archive.sph.harvard.edu/cas/Documents/Gunthreats2/gunspdf.pdf>.

⁵ THE FACES OF FATALITY: REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S STATEWIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2013), http://www.ndvfri.org/reports/florida/Florida_Statewide_AnnualReport_2013.pdf.

Some proponents of H.B. 4001 and S.B. 68 have suggested that allowing students to carry guns will protect them from becoming victims of sexual assault. This could not be further from the truth. Women, as well as people of other genders, are most in danger of suffering sexual violence while in the company of someone they know and trust: Countless studies affirm that the vast majority of campus rapes are perpetrated by the victim's partner, friend, or close acquaintance.⁶ These are precisely the people around whom victims would never think to carry a gun, let alone use one. And the presence of a gun in a case of domestic violence makes it *five times* more likely that the victim will be murdered, regardless of who owns the gun. Though some individual victims might believe that they are safer while carrying a gun, the research is clear: Arming potential victims is not an effective strategy for preventing sexual or dating violence, and will actually increase the likelihood that victims or other bystanders will be wounded or killed.

Campus carry legislation is widely regarded as a dangerous approach by experts, and is overwhelmingly opposed by students,⁷ Florida voters,⁸ university presidents and other higher education officials,⁹ campus safety advocates,¹⁰ and survivors of sexual and dating violence.¹¹ It is crucial that legislators like you continue to serve as a voice for our communities by rejecting these bills.

Your courage and resolve in opposing Florida H.B. 4001 and S.B. 68. serve as an example for legislators everywhere of strong leadership on this issue. Your continued efforts to defeat these bills, and others like them, will do a great deal to ensure that students in Florida are safe from gun violence *and* gender violence in school.

With gratitude,



Dana Bolger
Executive Director
Know Your IX

cc. Senator Andy Gardiner

⁶ National Institute of Justice, *Most Victims Know Their Attacker* (Oct. 1, 2008), <http://bit.ly/1PrE9ZC>.

⁷ Mark Ransford, *Most Students Don't Want Guns On Their Campuses* (Sept 9, 2013), <http://bit.ly/1mWhryA>.

⁸ Michael Auslen, *Study: Floridians Don't Want Guns on Campus, Are Split on Medicaid Expansion*, TAMPA BAY TIMES (Oct. 6, 2015, 11:13AM), <http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/study-floridians-dont-want-guns-on-campus-are-split-on-medicaid-expansion/2248571> (noting that 73% of adult Floridians oppose lifting campus gun bans).

⁹ Scott Jaschik, *Presidents vs. Guns*, INSIDE HIGHER ED. (Jun. 4, 2014), <http://bit.ly/1SUkAOB>.

¹⁰ Tara Culp-Ressler, *Why Allowing Concealed Weapons on College Campuses Is Not a Women's Issue*, THINK PROGRESS (Jan. 9, 2013, 9:00AM), <http://bit.ly/1nPzCZx>.

¹¹ Know Your IX, Petition to Colorado State House et. al., "Don't Vote to Allow Guns on College Campuses," CHANGE.ORG (2015), <http://chn.ge/1TL6aAC>.