

## **Testimony on Senate Bill 442 Daniel J. Hurley, CEO / October 13, 2015**

Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Dan Hurley. I serve as the CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities. The association is the coordinating board for the state's 15 public universities, which collectively serve more than 300,000 students annually.

I come before you today—alongside nearly every K-12 and higher education association in the state—firmly opposed to Senate Bill 442. In addition, the overwhelming majority of every higher education stakeholder group opposes the idea of introducing guns on campus, whether concealed or not. These include students, parents, faculty, college leaders, campus law enforcement professionals and college trustees.

It is not a coincidence that our campuses are among our safest sanctuaries, evident in the fact that the homicide rate in U.S. society overall is 44 times greater than that at the nation's colleges and universities; it is because the great majority of college campuses prohibit guns.

The reasons for keeping guns off campus are logical and rational. There is a general consensus among college administrators, faculty, students and law enforcement officials that introducing guns on campus is completely counter to fostering an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

Our state universities utilize their own police forces and those of local municipalities to oversee public safety. Arming the campus population with guns is not the answer to ensuring increased security.

The risks of gun-related deaths and injury on and near campus, whether through accidental discharge or criminal intent, are too great. An increased prevalence of guns could also have a significant impact on the suicide rate

among students. Suicide is already a top leading cause of death among American college students and an increased presence of guns could lead to a much higher proportion of suicide attempts being successful. The added presence of alcohol in settings populated by college students, in tandem with the maturity level of young adults, are additional risk factors.

The law enforcement community has made it very clear that allowing civilians to be armed only serves to enflame confusion and chaos in an active shooter situation. Imagine what would happen if guns were allowed on campus, what the response would be to an active shooter in a setting such as a large sporting event with tens of thousands of people present. It would represent a literal and chaotic circular firing squad. Confronting armed criminals should be left to highly trained police officers.

Finally, and ultimately, it must be underscored that this is an issue of local control. At Michigan's public universities, setting campus safety policies is at the discretion of the gubernatorial-appointed and popularly-elected members of the governing boards of these institutions. Each university sets its own tailored firearms policy. For example, several of our universities allow students to store hunting rifles in lockers provided by the campus police department, and which are available for check-out at any time. Senate Bill 442 squarely violates the constitutional authority granted to our public university governing boards to regulate concealed weapons on campus.

In sum, for a wide array of reasons that are logical, rational and constitutional in nature, the state universities of Michigan encourage you to vote NO on Senate Bill 442.