

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

DAILY BRUIN

Gov. Brown signs law banning concealed guns at California schools

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Gov. Jerry Brown signed a law Saturday that prohibits concealed weapons permit-holders from bringing firearms to K-12 schools and university campuses in California.

The bill, Senate Bill 707, was introduced by State Sen. Lois Wolk in February. Before the bill was passed, those with concealed-weapons permits were allowed by law to enter a college or university campus with concealed weapons at will.

Kate Moser, a spokesperson for the University of California, said in an email statement the university didn't have a systemwide policy on concealed weapons, and all UC campuses follow the requirements of the Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1995. The pre-existing law banned guns on campuses, but people with concealed-carry licenses were exempt from the same.

The Sheriff's Department can grant concealed-carry licenses to people such as California judges, full-time commissioners or individuals who fulfill all requirements of the license.

The bill was signed about a week after a gunman opened fire in a class at Umpqua Community College in Oregon and killed nine people, and a day after campus shootings at Texas Southern University and Northern Arizona University.

Dave Kopel, an associate policy analyst at the Cato Institute and benefactor of the National Rifle Association, said he thinks the bill will disarm victims and leave them incapable of defending themselves in unsafe situations.

Kopel added he thinks citizens who have been issued a permit to carry a firearm have to go through intensive background checks, so they should possess the right to carry firearms on a campus.

Jacob Kohlhepp, president of Bruin Republicans and fourth-year economics and political science student who disagrees with the bill, said he thinks Gov. Brown is using the bill to show action is being taken in response to the recent shootings.

“This is a classic example of making a situation worse by doing something, instead of doing nothing,” he said.

Kohlhepp added he thinks the bill will be ineffective in stopping campus shootings as historically most regions where school shootings take place are already gun-free zones.

“The law will lower the number of people who can defend themselves against these shootings by possessing guns on campus,” he said.

In September, the University of California sent a letter to Brown urging him to sign the bill because officials think it would ensure University communities are as safe as possible.

Only those who have written permission from school district superintendents or equivalent school authorities will be allowed to carry firearms on school campuses. People can still carry ammunition onto school grounds if it is contained within a locked compartment of a motor vehicle.