



**TOWN OF DURHAM
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RESOLUTION #2026-02 OF DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING HB 1793, AN ACT PROHIBITING PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FROM REGULATING THE POSSESSION OR CARRYING OF FIREARMS AND NON-LETHAL WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

WHEREAS, the Town of Durham is home to the flagship campus of the University of New Hampshire (UNH), a residential public university that brings approximately 16,000 students, faculty, and staff into the community on a daily basis, in a compact geographic area that requires careful, coordinated approaches to public safety and emergency management; and

WHEREAS, HB 1793 fails to comport with RSA 187-A:16 declaring that the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) institutions are allowed to operate with the highest degree of autonomy and self-governance, which would include firearm policies. The forced elimination of campus weapons policies at UNH would represent a significant and unnecessary intrusion by the state into the ability of local public safety officials and university leaders to tailor security measures to the particular needs, physical layout, and risk environment of the Durham campus; and

WHEREAS, UNH currently prohibits the use and possession of firearms on its campuses, requiring weapons be stored in secured lockers in the police station accessible twenty-four hours/day in the dispatch office for hunting, target-shooting or other normal usage just as they would be in a student's home; and

WHEREAS, HB 1793 would authorize private lawsuits, monetary damages, and attorney's fees against institutions that seek to maintain such safety policies; and

WHEREAS, college campuses present a unique public safety context, characterized by large concentrations of young adults living and socializing in close quarters, frequent large events and gatherings, and a documented prevalence of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and substance use, which together call for extra caution before introducing additional firearms into that environment; and

WHEREAS, suicide is a leading cause of death among college-age individuals nationwide, and ready access to firearms is associated with higher suicide lethality, making broad expansion of firearms on campus contrary to the evidence-based strategies promoted by mental health and campus safety professionals; and

WHEREAS, open or expanded carrying of firearms on a residential campus can heighten fear and anxiety among students, faculty, staff, visitors, and local residents, undermine the sense of safety that is central to an effective learning environment, and complicate law enforcement response in emergencies where officers must quickly distinguish between potential perpetrators and armed bystanders; and

WHEREAS, UNH and the Town of Durham have long worked in close partnership through the Durham Police Department, UNH Police, UNH Fire, and regional emergency management agencies to prevent violence, prepare for critical incidents, and maintain order, and HB 1793 would erode that collaboration by stripping UNH of a core safety tool it currently employs, namely the ability to regulate weapons on its own campus; and

WHEREAS, recent high-profile incidents of campus gun violence elsewhere in the United States, including on campuses that already had restrictions in place, highlight the ongoing need for thoughtful, multi-layered prevention and response strategies, but do not support the conclusion that adding more firearms into crowded campus settings will improve safety for students or surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, New Hampshire's public universities and the communities that host them are already working to address pressing issues such as housing affordability, student mental health, workforce development, and infrastructure needs, and the imposition of a one-size-fits-all "campus carry" mandate would distract from and undermine these priorities without demonstrable public-safety benefit; and

WHEREAS, the University of New Hampshire has expressed that it is "deeply worried" about HB 1793 and similar proposals that would abolish campus gun rules, reflecting the considered judgment of its leadership, security professionals, and campus community that such legislation would make the Durham campus less safe, not more; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Durham Town Council strongly opposes HB 1793 and any similar legislation that would prohibit public colleges and universities from regulating the possession or carrying of firearms and non-lethal weapons on campus, and urges the New Hampshire General Court to reject HB 1793.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Durham Town Council calls upon the Governor and the state's legislative delegation to support and preserve the ability of the University of New Hampshire and other public institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce evidence-based campus safety policies, developed in consultation with local law enforcement, mental health professionals, students, staff, and host communities.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 12th day of January, 2026 by a majority vote of the Durham Town Council with 7 voting in favor, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining.



Joe Friedman
Chair, Durham Town Council

ATTEST:



Rachel Deane, Town Clerk-Tax Collector