

Bullet points

1 What it takes to get an open carry license

- Must be 21 years old
- Costs \$140
- Valid residential and employment information, email address, credit card and photo identification
- Information regarding any psychiatric, drug, alcohol or criminal history
- Written exam
- Training course including both gun safety instruction and proficiency test

2 Individuals currently licensed for concealed handguns are not required to attend additional training

3 Torchy's Tacos, Whataburger, Sonic, Texadelphia, Qdoba, Perot Museum, Northpark, Galleria, Fuzzy's Taco, Whole Foods and HEB banned open carry

4 Home Depot, Kroger and Walmart allow open carry

Sources: Texas Department of Public Safety, Moms Demand Action, The Dallas Morning News



Not on our watch

Barron Fletcher ['18] passes by signs that would prohibit guns on campus. Were this campus a business, it would be required to post the top sign to ban open carry. Because schools are "gun-free" zones, the sign on the bottom directs CHL visitors to stop and identify themselves to Campus Security.

Photo illustration by Michael Patterson

Open carry law triggers feelings of discomfort, protection

By | Kathleen Hobson

The change of the year brought with it a change in law, as Texas joined 44 other states allowing citizens to publicly carry firearms. This new "Open Carry Law" allows Texas residents with a license to wear holstered weapons in plain sight. Before January 1, concealed permits authorized license holders to carry a gun, but out of sight.

Despite Texas' pro-gun reputation, a survey of 132 students Jan. 29, 44 percent don't have guns at home and only 17 percent would consider seeking both concealed or open carry licenses.

Given the only difference between concealed and open carry is visibility, leading some to question why the distinction is important.

"I'm a big Second Amendment guy, most law enforcers are," Director of Campus Safety Robert Monts said. "[But] when you can protect yourself by concealed carry, I don't see why having it on the outside really makes the difference, or where the benefit outweighs the potential risks."

According to Government teacher Mark Oglesby, one reason to oppose open carry is the fear.

"It's visual," Oglesby said. "Some people that see a gun are going to be antsy and uncomfortable. Some people carrying the guns are doing it as an intimidation factor. Others are doing it for security to feel safe."

Despite the opposition, the new law brings several bene-

fits, such as providing awareness about one's surroundings.

"I would rather know that someone has a gun so that I can mentally prepare," McKenna Pressley ['16] said. "If I could see the gun, I'd feel safer."

Having grown up around firearms, Pressley is familiar with general safety. She plans to attend West Point Military Academy in the fall.

"In some cases, especially in the military, they're a necessary evil," Pressley said. "But that's not to say that violence is always the answer."

The new law leaves businesses to decide whether to embrace visible firearms on their premises. Signage based on each business's policy must be clear and within regulation. Both pro and con open carry proponents have threatened to boycott businesses based on their policies.

"I suppose as long as no one is violating the law, I've got to deal with it," Ethics teacher Matthew Fuller said. "I think people waste a lot of time protesting."

Twenty-five percent of students believe the open carry law will function as a deterrent to crime, but 33 percent worry some people

will use guns unlawfully.

Those previously holding concealed carry permits are not required to retrain before openly carrying, but new permit seekers must complete updated and more intensive training.

"If you are a responsible gun owner, you're not going to object to waiting a few more weeks to get your hand on a gun," Fuller said.



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—Robert Monts
Director of Campus Safety

The vast majority of students support regulations for open carry permit. Eighty-four percent want gun buyers to pass a criminal background checks and 67 percent support mandatory training.

"The crazy people that shoot up schools will get guns one way or another, no matter what the law says," Blair Oden ['18] said.

Although the law does not change that guns are forbidden on private and public secondary or elementary school campuses, campus officers constantly train.

"We are going to continue to build on our training programs," Monts said. "It's a constant process and a constant assessment."

This new law calls for adjustments as people get accustomed

to seeing civilians openly display weapons.

"I think some of the novelty will wear off and people won't like the attention that it draws to them," Monts said.

Guns are banned from sporting events, bars, voting locations, correctional facilities and secure areas of airports.

"We are going to put some signs at the main entrances to let people know [this is a gun free zone], just in case," Monts said.

Fuller views tightening gun regulations as a solution.

"Sadly, there will always be a way people can get guns," Fuller said. "But I do think if we enact stiffer gun regulations, then eventually we'll see lower instances of horrific mass shootings."

This law shouldn't directly affect campus security.

"I don't like [the new law], but it hasn't changed the strategy that we have [on campus] as far as being proactive and ready for things like this," Campus Safety Officer Nippy Jones said.

Security staff is prepared for the event that someone may attempt to bring a gun on campus.

"ESD security is trained in observing and reporting, whether you're carrying a concealed gun or an open [one]," Monts said. "So I don't think it will really change [security on campus]."

Unarmed campus guards and armed Dallas Police personnel will address concerns.

"The gates and fences help," Monts said. "All of these things in totality really make this campus a safer place."