

Hon. C.L. Butch Otter  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720

March 12, 2014

**Via Facsimile**

Dear Governor Otter:

We are the mothers of students victimized by gun violence on college campuses and are aware that recently passed legislation (SB 1254 – guns on campus) is now on your desk awaiting your action. This legislation would allow retired law enforcement and people with an enhanced permit to carry concealed weapons on certain parts of Idaho's college and university campuses.

We are writing to you today because we reject the notion that allowing concealed carry by university staff, students or visitors will make campuses safer places. Statistically, college campuses have very low crime rates. What happened at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University remains extremely rare. We have lived the nightmare of what guns on campus can do and we strongly reject the idea that adding more guns into the mix is a safe or sane answer. It is not!


Our understanding is that Presidents of all eight of Idaho's public colleges and universities and chiefs of police from those communities oppose this legislation. In addition, we have been told that large numbers of students also oppose this bill.

We have replayed the shooting spree events at both campuses over and over in our heads - more times than anyone can imagine. For those who survived, it was the most intense, stressful, and chaotic situation ever experienced and not one survivor is advocating for guns on campus; adding more people with more guns would only have made the situation even more dangerous for everyone. No one can predict their behavior or reaction in dangerous situations. There is no evidence that armed students would be able to save any lives and, statistically speaking, are more likely to endanger themselves and others in active shooter situations. Law enforcement at every level, including campus police departments, are opposed to concealed carry on campuses.

Allowing concealed carry on campuses in Idaho would change the entire dynamic in classrooms, make other areas where concealed weapons would be permitted vulnerable to all manner of accidental and targeted shootings and create dangerous situations at alcohol fueled student parties. The movement to allow concealed carry on campuses is an over-reaction to a virtually non-existent problem – college campuses are some of the safest places in our nation.

We implore you to reject this approach, as have states all over America. In fact, just recently, legislation to allow guns on campus was rejected in Georgia, Indiana, Montana and Wyoming. It is neither supported by law enforcement nor by college administrators. It will not make colleges safer during a rare shooting, and it will make them demonstratively more dangerous. Please listen to the leaders in higher education and the voices of the students and veto SB 1254.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
  
Lori Haas

  
Mary Kay Mace

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Lori Haas and Mary Kay Mace both have daughters who fell victim to gun violence in two separate rampage shootings on different college campuses. Emily Haas survived two gunshots to the head while attending French class at Virginia Tech in April of 2007. Ryanne Mace was a sophomore majoring in Psychology when she was killed at Northern Illinois University in February of 2008, just three months shy of turning twenty. Both mothers have turned to activism, urging legislators to enact more comprehensive commonsense legislation to prevent future tragedies of gun violence that can happen to anyone, anywhere.

Although Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University both experienced horrific mass murders by lone gunmen a mere ten months apart, the fact remains that school shootings are still extremely rare occurrences. Both mothers have spoken to survivors who maintain that there was no way having the students armed could have averted disaster. In fact, there likely would have been more fatalities and injuries had other students been firing guns in sheer panic and terror. We are asking Governor Otter to take our views, sadly, based on real life situations, into consideration when he decides on whether or not to sign SB. 1254, which we believe will impact the safety and welfare of students and faculty in Idaho's colleges and universities.