

Statement Regarding Senate Bill 1325/House Bill 1202

Allowing faculty or staff to carry weapons on campus is dangerous and irresponsible. By arming faculty and staff, we are putting them and students at greater risk of serious bodily injury or death by gunfire. Ask police officers who have responded to an active shooter event. They will tell you that information can be very sparse or inaccurate during an active shooter event, so if a teacher has a gun out when police show up, there is a decent chance the teacher will be shot.

Teachers and faculty carry a heavy enough load without being asked to shoulder the additional responsibility of carrying a firearm into the classroom. Who will be responsible when a student gets access to a teacher's weapon and shoots the teacher? Another student? Himself? Or takes the weapon home and shoots family members? Will the legislators who gave the student access to that weapon be accountable?

The State Senate passed SB1325 by a vote of 26 to 5. HB1202 is on the April 17 State House calendar. These bills would allow teachers to carry firearms in schools - a potential death sentence to faculty, staff, and students.

The voices of the people are being ignored once again, as the Senate not only silenced microphones during public protest and outcry, but forcibly removed protesters from the gallery. Our governing body needs to listen to the people and pass legislation that is in the best interests of students, parents, faculty, and staff; legislation that focuses on prevention of gun violence rather than the proliferation of weapons.

We, the undersigned candidates, stand in solidarity with the activists who are speaking up for safety in our schools and urge the Tennessee House of Representatives to reject this irresponsible and dangerous legislation, for the sake of the lives of faculty, staff and students. Furthermore, we implore Governor Bill Lee to act responsibly on behalf of the citizens of the State of Tennessee and veto this bill if it crosses his desk.

In solidarity,

James Dallas, Candidate for State Senate District 28

Alex Pierce, Candidate for State House District 64

Eileen Longstreet, Candidate for State House District 64

LaRhonda Williams, Candidate for State House District 65

Jason Luttrell, Candidate for State House District 70

Tim Coy, Candidate for State House District 71

Teri Mai, Candidate for State House District 92