

I am writing in support of SB 554 because it would help

\* keep guns out of schools and off college campuses, and

\* empower local officials to make the public safety decisions that are right for their communities.

I feel comfortable submitting electronic testimony to this committee but I would NOT feel comfortable providing testimony in person because I would be fearful that someone who opposes this bill would carry a gun into the Legislature and use that gun against me and other supporters of this bill. If this bill becomes law, then more people will be empowered to testify in person in all settings where local officials have decided to ban guns from their premises.

With the sharp rise in anti-democratic extremism, we need to make sure that local officials have the tools they need to protect public safety. SB 554 will do exactly that -- giving local officials the tools they need to protect buildings essential to the functioning of government.

In addition, research has shown that policies that force colleges to allow guns on campuses are likely to lead to more shootings, homicides, and suicides and that these guns are not likely to prevent mass shootings on campus. Research also strongly supports the idea that if guns are carried into schools, children are more likely to access those guns.

Please vote YES for public health and safety. Please vote for SB 554 and pass it on to the full House with a recommendation of Do Pass.