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Handgun bill stalls in Texas legislature

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The 82nd Texas Legislature, which concluded on May 30, discussed the controversial issue of allowing concealed handguns on public college campuses.

The idea is not new. It was introduced by Senator Jeff Wentworth as SB 1164 during the 2009 session.

The bill has been surrounded by controversy. Proponents of the bill believe that it would enable self-defense during emergency situations; opponents fear that the specifics of a university environment, combined with the legalization of concealed carry, would create a more dangerous situation rather than a safer one.

These same fears were revived during this legislative session when SB 354 was introduced.

Wentworth was unable to pass SB 354 as a stand-alone bill, but eventually passed the issue as an amendment to another bill (which requires a lower vote threshold to pass). However, when the Texas House of Representatives received the bill, Rep. Mike Villarreal challenged the amendment, stating that the bill covered two issues, which breaks a constitutional rule.

The bill was sent back to the Texas Senate where the amendment was removed.

Barring Gov. Perry calling a special session to discuss the issue, concealed carry on campus has reached the end of the line—at least until the 83rd Texas Legislature.