

Four Texas Baptist schools ban handguns on campus; more likely to follow

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Four universities affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas will not allow concealed handgun license holders to carry weapons on campus, and other Texas Baptist schools appear likely to join them.

In February, Baylor University officials announced the Waco school would opt out of [Texas Senate Bill 11](#), commonly known as the “campus carry” law.

Since then, the governing boards of three other Texas Baptist schools—Hardin-Simmons University, Howard Payne University and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor—voted to claim the limited exemption for private colleges and universities in the campus-carry law, which takes effect Aug. 1.

Private schools exercise opt-out provision

They join about two-dozen other private universities in Texas—including Abilene Christian University, Texas Christian University and Southern Methodist University—in opting out of campus carry.

While it allows an exemption for private schools, the campus carry law prohibits public institutions of higher education from passing rules that prevent licensed gun-holders from carrying concealed weapons on school property.

Hardin-Simmons University conducted forums with students, faculty and

staff to gather input, and the board considered feedback from each group before deciding to continue its policy that prohibits concealed weapons on campus, said Dave Rozeboom, vice president for student life.

Anticipating board action

Several other Texas Baptist schools are in the process of gathering information prior to formal action by a governing board.

Both Dallas Baptist University and Baptist University of the Americas gathered input and will present findings to their trustees at May board meetings, and Wayland Baptist University likely will act before the end of April. Houston Baptist University is reviewing the matter.

East Texas Baptist University surveyed faculty and staff, and more than 80 percent strongly opposed allowing students with concealed handgun permits to carry weapons on campus, President Blair Blackburn said. Focus groups of students—including student government leaders and resident assistants who work in student housing—also overwhelmingly opposed it, he added.

When the ETBU board of trustees meets in May, Blackburn plans to present the findings, along with his recommendation the school opt out of the campus carry law.

“I am personally opposed to campus carry,” Blackburn said. “I am a CHL (concealed handgun license) holder and a hunter, but a university campus is no place for students and other people to carry weapons.”