



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

March 16, 2018

DEADLY WEAPON BAN CONSIDERED IN HOUSE COMMITTEE

Yesterday in the House Appropriations Committee, legislators discussed House Bill 904. The bill would prohibit the carrying or possession of firearms on the property of public institutions of higher education. In testimony supporting the bill the USM made it clear that campus safety and security is a complex and multi-layered issue. Nonetheless, **the unauthorized possession of a deadly weapon at any USM institution is prohibited** and violators are subject to disciplinary action.

Several years ago, the USM Board of Regents established the Campus Safety and Security Workgroup. The goal of this Workgroup was three-fold:

- Identify “best practices” that can be implemented at USM institutions across the state to enhance the safety and security of our campuses, be they urban, suburban, or rural;
- Ensure that steps taken do not diminish the atmosphere of openness and accessibility our campuses enjoy as community-based institutions of higher education, nor encroach upon the rights of students, faculty and staff;
- Establish an official, ongoing mechanism to support, monitor, coordinate, and update campus safety and security initiatives system-wide.

The USM supports House Bill 904 because it retains the ability of the institution to set policies for the authorization of firearm possession. The USM is a diverse system that includes several different types of institutions. Given that campus safety and security is an ongoing, ever-changing issue, USM presidents need to incorporate flexibility into decisions concerning campus safety and security.

DIAPER-CHANGING STATIONS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS DISCUSSED

In the Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday, lawmakers heard testimony on House Bill 141. The bill requires that a diaper-changing facility be installed in each restroom in a public building, subject to exceptions, if (1) a diaper-changing facility is already installed in any other restroom in the building or (2) the restroom is built or substantially renovated in a public building on or after October 1, 2018. The USM provided information to the committee.

House Bill 141 aligns with the standard practice in new construction and renovation efforts being undertaken at USM institutions. USM's capital planners and facilities managers have been aggressive in baby-diaper changing station installation ever since President Obama signed the **Bathrooms Accessible in Every Situation (BABIES) Act** into law in October 2016. The federal law requires that men's restrooms in federal buildings open to the public must contain changing tables. The law stipulates that changing stations must be "physically safe, sanitary and appropriate" and be available in both women's and men's bathrooms in federal buildings open for public use.

The USM is designing into new buildings (always) and major renovations (case-by-case) a diaper changing table in BOTH the men's and women's main public restrooms. House Bill 141 also aligns with the USM Board of Regents general policy for nursing employees and students. In June of 2012, the USM Board approved a policy entitled *Supports for Nursing Mothers* requiring each USM "...institution to provide space at reasonable locations on campus where employees who are nursing mothers may breastfeed or express milk." The policy outlines the standards for space, location and furnishings. The policy specifies that a restroom may not be designated a lactation facility.