



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 4, February 1, 2010

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

University System Issues Statement Supporting Current Georgia Law on Firearms

During a hearing at the state capitol last week on House Bill 615, which would allow guns to be carried into most public buildings, including college campuses, and at public gatherings, University System of Georgia (USG) officials introduced into the record a statement supporting current Georgia law, which, with limited exceptions, prohibits the possession of firearms

on college and university campuses.

Signed by Board of Regents **Chairman Robert F. Hatcher**, **Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr.**, and the presidents of the 35 USG institutions, the statement reads as follows:

“We believe that current Georgia law, which creates school safety zones where firearms are not permitted, is very clear

and has served the students, faculty, and staff of the University System of Georgia well.

“We are deeply concerned about proposed legislation that would permit firearms on our campuses; in our classrooms, residence halls, fraternity houses, student centers, and parking lots; and at our athletic and other public events.

“We do not think this promotes a safe

learning environment for our students or is in the best interest of the state or of the University System.

“We ask that you keep in mind that our institutions work very hard to recruit the best faculty, staff, and students across the state, the nation, and the world. The best faculty, staff, and students always have choices about where they

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A Closer Look at

Len Walker
Chair, House Higher Education Committee

Rep. Len Walker represents House District 107, which includes portions of Gwinnett and Walton Counties, and he has made Loganville his home base.

Representative Walker was appointed by House Speaker David Ralston to chair the Higher Education Committee at the start of the 2010 Legislative Session. He is also a member of the Appropriations and Rules committees, and he serves on the Health Appropriations Subcommittee as well. He is the former chairman of the Committee on Human Relations and Aging.



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A Closer Look at

Earl Ehrhart
Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Ed

Earl Ehrhart is the longest serving Republican in the Georgia House of Representatives, having been first elected to the House in 1988. He represents District 36, which includes portions of Northwest Cobb County, and makes his home in Powder Springs.

House Speaker David Ralston appointed Ehrhart to chair the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education in January. The former chairman of the House Rules Committee, Ehrhart is also a member of the Banks and Banking, MARTOC, and State Institutions and



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Gun Bill

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work or attend school. Higher education is a reputation-driven industry. We believe that changing the current law prohibiting weapons on campus would have a very adverse effect on our competitive

position and on the safety and well being of our students, faculty, and staff.

“Our unanimous recommendation is to retain the current, unambiguous statute with respect to school safety zones as it stands. However, if new legislation is adopted,

we respectfully ask for a specific exemption for University System institutions.”

At the hearing before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee (non-civil), chaired by Rep. Ed Setzler, two University System of Georgia (USG) representatives

spoke in support of current Georgia law: **Dr. Daniel J. Kaufman**, president of *Georgia Gwinnett College* in Lawrenceville, and **Alina Staskevicius**, president of the *Georgia Institute of Technology* Student Government Association. 🏠

A copy of the USG’s statement can be accessed at: http://www.usg.edu/pub_docs/GunStatement1.10_.pdf

Ehrhart

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Property committees. Also, Ehrhart previously served as chairman of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a nationwide, bi-partisan group of legislators.

Ehrhart graduated from the University of Georgia (UGA) with a bachelor of arts in political science in 1980. While a student at UGA, he was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha the national political science honor society, as well as a member of Phi Kappa Fraternity.

The National Federation of Independent Business has named Ehrhart a “Guardian of Small Business,” due to his years of work for businesses in Georgia. Recently, Ehrhart received the “Champion of the Free Enterprise System Award” from the Associated Builders and Contractors of Georgia. He also has received awards from the Medical Association of Georgia, Kennesaw State University, The Twenty Second Air Force Reserve and the Georgia Federation of Young Republicans.

Ehrhart’s involvement with the state legislature has received national media attention, and he has been featured in the New York Times and The Economist, in addition to Georgia media. He also has appeared on CNN and is a frequent contributor to Hannity on Fox News Channel.

Ehrhart has served on the Powder Springs Downtown Development Association, which led to the formation of Powder Springs Square. Ehrhart also is a member of the West Cobb Rotary Club, The Cobb County Chamber of Commerce and the Honorary Commanders Association. He is an Honorary Safety Fire Commissioner and the District Chairman for the Boy Scouts of America representing the Covered Bridge District. 🏠

Walker

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Walker attended high school in Thomaston, Ga., and graduated from Asbury College with a bachelor of arts degree in 1971. Since graduating from Asbury Theological Seminary with a Master’s in divinity degree in 1978, Walker has served churches in Rocky Face, Jasper and Loganville, Ga. He and his wife, Marilynn, have been married for 33 years and have five children and six grandchildren.

In addition to his legislative responsibilities, Representative Walker is involved in several local civic organizations. He is a member of the Walton County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He served as a board member of Covenant Christian Academy and was formerly active with the Lions Club. 🏠