

News

To Conceal, or Not to Conceal?

Samantha Huffman, Staff Writer

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution reads as follows: A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The Second Amendment is currently one of the most debated topics, because of all of the shootings that have happened.

Concealed carrying is when a firearm can not be seen to the average observer. A current citizen of North Carolina has the right to obtain a carry concealed permit at any time if they follow proper procedures including but not limited to taking a safety course

offered by a licensed instructor, passing a thorough background check, and submitting to a screening of their mental health records.

In January of 2017, North Carolina Republican Representative Richard Hudson sponsored H.R. 38 also known as the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017. This piece of legislation pushes for all states to recognize carry concealed permits given in a different state. Of the many arguments surrounding this piece of legislation, some take the stand that H.R. 38 is dangerous because some states do not

require a safety class to be given this permit, and some are worried about the possibility of more violence. Arguments from the other side state that the bill contains the basic safety measures such as still requiring a federal background check in order to purchase a firearm and maintaining current laws regarding allowance to carry in certain areas. This piece of legislation is being presented at a national level and is backed by the National Rifle Association.

The most recent piece of concealed carry legislation in North Carolina is House Bill 746 that passed in the House in June

of 2017 and has been sent to the state senate. According to North Carolina General Assembly records, this piece of legislation would make carry concealed permits obsolete by allowing people to conceal weapons anywhere that allows open carry.

These changes are made in hopes to protect the average law-abiding citizen if they happen to put a coat on over their firearm. This piece of legislation was also presented as a means to drop the concealed carry age from 21 to 18. This is being backed by the gun-rights Grass Roots N.C. as well as the National Rifle Association.

First Digital Pill Approved for Biomedical Tracking

Abigail Ojeda, Staff Writer

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first digital drug that can be identified and tracked by anyone, even after intake. On Nov. 13, 2017, the FDA named Abilify MyCite to be the first "digital ingestion tracking system" available for prescription. While this form of Abilify can potentially help the treatment of those with schizophrenia, bipolar I disorder, depression, dementia, and more, some have met this new biomedical idea with distrust.

This tracking system consists of the Abilify pill and an IEM (Ingestible Event Marker) sensor, a patch, and a smartphone app. The IEM sensor, according to

Abilify's manufacturer, Otsuka, "is the size of a grain of sand, and is made up of ingredients found in food." As soon as the pill comes in contact with stomach fluid, says Otsuka, the MyCite patch "detects and records the date and time of the ingestion of the tablet as well as certain physiological data such as activity level." This data is then transferred directly to the app on any device with the app login information.

According to the *New York Times*, the FDA's decision shows the increased use of digital devices to "address the expensive, longstanding problem that millions of patients do not take drugs as prescribed." In fact, the New York

Times continues, about \$100 billion dollars a year goes to medical bills for issues patients could have prevented if they had taken their medicine regularly.

However, according to the *New York Times*, there is currently no evidence that Abilify MyCite would be a viable solution. Dr. Paul Appelbaum, director of law, ethics, and psychiatry at Columbia University's psychiatry department, said, "Many of those patients [who take Abilify] don't take meds because they don't like side effects, or don't think they have an illness, or because they become paranoid about the doctor or the doctor's intentions."

Bethany Helm, a junior

studying Family and Consumer Sciences, said, "[Abilify MyCite] could easily transform into something patients are coerced to do. If it can remain purely 100% optional then sure, it sounds like a good idea. I still would like to know what dangers are associated with it."

Logan Joyner, a junior and nutrition major, said, "While the traceable pill has good intentions and would allow more medicine to be administered effectively, this information could be easily abused if it entered the wrong hands. While the technology is impressive, the potential misuse outweighs the positive applications." [sic]

Tax Reform Support Needed!

E-mail from Dr. Jo Allen to Meredith College on Nov. 27, 2017

Dear Friends,

...we desperately need you to weigh in on behalf of Meredith College and our students and employees.

The projected schedule is that Senators will return to Washington and vote on their bill by the end of the week. Support for the Senate bill is much more fragile than in the House. But the leadership in Congress is determined to pass tax reform legislation, so I am writing to ask you to contact Senator Burr and Senator Tillis by Tuesday if you have not already done so.

Phone numbers, fax numbers, and the name and email of each senator's education staff person are listed below. You can call and leave a message with the staffer answering the main phone number, fax a letter, or send an email...Our state and national organizations that advocate for private institutions such as Meredith have developed points that are critical to make with our Senators.

Fortunately, a number of components in the bill passed by the House targeting higher

education are not in the Senate bill. We need to thank Senators Burr and Tillis for not including the following in the Senate bill and ask them to oppose any amendments that would eliminate student loan interest deductions, eliminate private activity bonds, tax tuition remission or tax employer financial support for employees' higher education.

We do need to express grave concern that the Senate bill singles out private higher education (and not public institutions) for a 1.4 percent excise tax on endowments. (The current version is based on endowments of greater than \$250k per student.) Others have noted the extreme irony of the federal government (with its \$20 trillion debt) attempting to tax institutions that have exerted tremendous discipline to create "savings accounts" in the form of endowments, from which we take modest earnings to support scholarships, professional development, and campus maintenance for our students, faculty, and staff.

Some talking points on this

issue are included below...

*Establishment of this tax would set a precedent of taxing resources of private, non-profit higher education. Once in place, the tax could easily be expanded to include all private college and university endowments.

*This tax would pave the way for additional attempts to tax our tax-exempt colleges and universities - one of the key elements of our "not-for-profit" status.

*We are not in any way encouraging that public higher education be included in this proposal. Yet, it is important to highlight that taxing endowments would be bad public policy overall and singling out private colleges and universities would be even worse.

*Taxing endowments will lead to higher costs for students and to difficulty in fundraising when donors know their gifts will be taxed.

*Private college and university endowments are not like private foundations, despite the comparison Congress is making for this bill. The only private foundations that are

taxed are those that make grants for other charitable activities. Private foundations that provide charitable activities/services are not taxed just as private college and university endowments that provide services to support education and research are not taxed.

Our concern is that these kinds of tax reforms will result in higher costs for students, a less competitive environment for recruiting and retaining top faculty and staff, and the curbing of critical donor support. Thank you for making these contacts. We are working closely with other national associations and will need to ask you to make contacts again when/if the bill goes to conference. Please know how much we all appreciate your support in helping us to KEEP COLLEGE AFFORDABLE!

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