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Students Challenge CU's Concealed Carry Weapons Ban

Campus Police Against Weapons On Campus

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DENVER -- A gun rights group said it has launched a court challenge of the University of Colorado's ban on concealed weapons on campus.

Students for Concealed Carry on Campus said Thursday it is filing suit in El Paso County District Court in Colorado Springs. CU has campuses in Colorado Springs, Boulder, Denver and Aurora.

The group said a state law governing concealed weapons has no provision that allows the university to ban guns. It also said the ban is so broad that it violates the state constitution.

CU System spokeswoman Deborah Mendez-Wilson said state law does give the system's governing Board of Regents the authority to ban concealed weapons. She said the attorney general reviewed and upheld the policy in a formal opinion in 2003.

Other plaintiffs in the lawsuit are CU-Denver student Martha Altman, CU-Colorado Springs student John Davis and CU-Colorado Springs alumnus Eric Mote. They are represented by the Rocky Mountain Legal Foundation.

"No law-abiding adult should be denied the ability to protect herself, either on or off campus," said William Perry Pendley, president and chief legal officer of Mountain States Legal Foundation.

Michael Guzman, president of Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, said gun bans don't keep the public safe.

"SCCC does not want a gun in every student's or professor's hands, but it is absurd that someone can legally carry on one side of the street but not the other," he said. "A total ban on licensed concealed carry does not improve safety and we have seen that such policies can lead to tragedy."

Mendez-Wilson defended the policy, saying the CU System's police and campus police across the country oppose allowing weapons on campus.

She said part of the university's core mission is keeping its campuses safe for students and faculty.

Mendez-Wilson said the regents have no plans to change the policy, which has been in place since 1970.

"Instead of a shootout on the OK corral here on campus ... I think is not the way to go," said Jim Cole, graduate student at CU Denver.

"I think I would feel a little safer if the right were to be protected and we were able to defend ourselves," said Kenny Hembree, sophomore at Metro State.

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