



New Hampshire

January 14, 2026

Honorable Chairman Terry Roy
House Criminal Justice and Public Safety
One Granite Place, Room 159
Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 1793

Dear Chairman Roy and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Holly Stevens, and I am the Director of Public Policy at NAMI New Hampshire, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am writing today in opposition of HB 1793, prohibiting public colleges and universities from regulating the possession or carrying of firearms and non-lethal weapons on campus.

Research demonstrates that many mental illnesses emerge in late adolescence and early adulthood. This is especially true for depression and other mood disorders and schizophrenia.¹ We also know that while generally, mental illnesses may emerge before adulthood, treatment typically does not occur until a number of years later.² Therefore, just as young people are launching into adulthood where they are exposed to all new social situations, pressures, and stressors some are also dealing with untreated mental health symptoms, including psychosis. Having guns on college campuses, readily accessible, could lead to preventable suicide deaths.

It is important to note that 90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide. Unlike most other means of suicide, use of a firearm in a suicide attempt is almost always lethal and leaves little opportunity for intervention. Given the lethality of firearms, limiting access to them on college campuses when youth and young adults may be far away from family and other natural supports will save lives.

¹ Sebastian Ocklenburg, Ph. D, At What Age Does Mental Illness Begin?, Psychology Today, June 18, 2021; <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-asymmetric-brain/202106/what-age-does-mental-illness-begin>

² Kessler RC, Amminger GP, Aguilar-Gaxiola S, Alonso J, Lee S, Ustün TB. Age of onset of mental disorders: a review of recent literature. *Curr Opin Psychiatry*. 2007 Jul;20(4):359-64. doi: 10.1097/YCO.0b013e32816ebc8c. PMID: 17551351; PMCID: PMC1925038.

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In New Hampshire, the rate of gun suicide increased 55% from 2009 to 2018, compared to a 19% increase nationwide.³ Also in the Granite State, suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals ages 15-34. From 2018-2021, firearms were used in 50% of suicide deaths in New Hampshire. During that same period, of all firearm deaths, suicide accounted for 88%. Every year, an average of 124 people in New Hampshire die by gun suicides.⁴

Simply put, allowing public colleges and universities to restrict access to firearms on their campuses, where there are undiagnosed and untreated mental illnesses, is a commonsense measure to assist in addressing the major public health issue of suicide in New Hampshire. Therefore, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote inexpedient to legislate on HB 1793.

Sincerely,



Holly A. Stevens, Esq.

³ Everytown data sheet, <https://maps.everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Every-State-Fact-Sheet-2.0-042720-NewHampshire.pdf>

⁴ EveryStat New Hampshire, <https://everystat.org/#NewHampshire>

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