



SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Greg Sankey
Commissioner

February 7, 2018

Dr. Mark Keenum, President
Mississippi State University
PO Box 6018
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dr. Jeffrey Vitter, Chancellor
University of Mississippi
123 Lyceum
University, MS 38677

Dear President Keenum and Chancellor Vitter:

This letter is in response to proposed House Bill 1083 and its potential to introduce concealed carry weapons into stadiums, arenas and other college sports venues.

The University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University are founding members of the Southeastern Conference and each has established a long history of working with public safety officials to provide a safe environment for intercollegiate athletic competition.

Given the intense atmosphere surrounding athletic events, adding weapons increases meaningful safety concerns and is expected to negatively impact the intercollegiate athletics programs at your universities in several ways. If HB 1083 is adopted to permit weapons in college sports venues, it is likely that competitors will decline opportunities to play in Oxford and Starkville, game officials will decline assignments, personal safety concerns will be used against Mississippi's universities during the recruiting process and fan attendance will be negatively impacted. When similar laws have been introduced in the past, the SEC office has received clear statements of concern from our member universities due to safety concerns associated with the passage of such laws intended to allow weapons at our athletic events and sports venues.

It is our desire to see athletic events and sports venues exempted from proposed House Bill 1083.

The SEC's universities work closely with public safety officials to ensure the safety of participants and fans in our competitive venues. We will continue to closely monitor the status of House Bill 1083. In the event House Bill 1083 becomes law and includes concealed carry in college sports venues, the SEC's Presidents and Chancellors will consider existing SEC regulations and bylaws to determine appropriate modifications to scheduling, safety and officiating policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Sankey', written over a white background.

Greg Sankey
Commissioner