



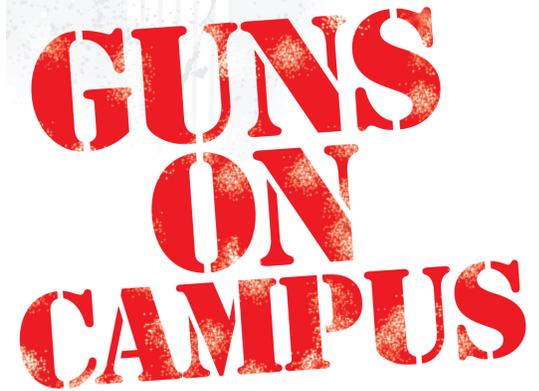
Back to School List: Books, Pencils, Guns?

A Discussion About Firearms on College Campuses

All 50 states allow concealed carry if certain requirements are met. Currently there are 17 states that ban concealed carry entirely on college campuses. In 24 states, the decision to ban concealed carry or not is up to the individual college or university (National Conference of State Legislatures). Pennsylvania is one of these 24 states leaving the decision up to the individual college or university. Specifically, Penn State has made the decision to ban Carry on Campus. Penn State's policy states: "The possession, carrying, or use of any weapon, ammunition, or explosive by any person is prohibited on all University property except by authorized law enforcement officers and other persons specifically authorized by the University" (Penn State Policy Manual).

Whether or not concealed carry should be allowed on campuses is heavily debated. People all across the U.S have strong opinions regarding this topic. Former Senator and current Florida State University President, John E. Thrasher, is one of the many figureheads that is against Carry on Campus. Thrasher expresses strong feelings on the topic revealing that "I am against it. I killed it. I have worked against it

since then” and “you have my promise that I will work against it this year”. Contrary to this stance, Jerry Falwell Jr. the President of Liberty University, in Virginia, addresses the student body saying that “I encourage all of you to get your permit. We offer a free course”. Recently, in fall of 2016, Liberty University has allowed concealed Carry on Campus.



**GUNS
ON
CAMPUS**

According to U.S Legal, the definition for concealed carry is that of a handgun or weapon, concealed and kept under one’s control. There is however a definition for a “concealed weapon” where a dangerous weapon is carried “on the person as to be knowingly or willfully concealed from sight usually in violation of statute. “This definition is in contrast to the first one posed above. This could be due to the heavy amount of influence placed on the topic concerning whether or not concealed carry is allowed for safety reasons or not. Concealed carry is different than open carry. Open carry is when the weapon, most likely a handgun, is carried and is visible.

The many stances taken on Carry on Campus range from a variety of ideas. There are three main visions on how this issue may be approached. These three approaches will be further explained, however for a quick glimpse each stance is based on certain ideas that are significantly valued within the United States of America. The first approach is based on self-defense, which lies on America’s value of civil liberty and security. Our second amendment reserves our right to bear arms, therefore according to the Constitution many would believe that the people throughout the United States have the right to carry a gun. Our second approach is based on our importance of community in our society. The idea of this approach is that for the community to feel safe, the constitutional right is still in place however a person must go through a set of clearances to attain and carry a gun. The final approach is a different perspective on America’s value of security and pragmatism. It is for those who believe that there should simply be no firearms in general.

Upon reviewing the information presented tonight, reflect on what the best means of action for this topic could be.

Approach 1: Self-Defense

One approach to the Carry on Campus issue is to allow students to carry a gun for reasons such as self-defense and as a right imbedded within the Constitution. One of the biggest arguments for Concealed Carry on Campus is that the majority of mass shootings are perpetrated in gun free zones. According to the Crime Prevention Research Center, from 2009 to the present, 92 percent of all masses (Brown). By allowing universities to be gun free zones this arguably puts them at risk for mass shootings. Some would even argue that guns deter criminals from committing crimes, such as in a 1982 survey of male felons in 11 state prisons dispersed across the U.S. found: 34 percent had been “scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed victim; 40 percent had decided not to commit a crime because they “knew or believed that the

“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.” –Second Amendment

victim was carrying a gun; 69 percent personally knew other criminals who had been “scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed victim (Agresti). Another argument put forth by this community is that the Constitution reads, “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” (U.S. Constitution). In the supreme court case D.C. v. Heller, it was ruled that it is the “right of the people” refers to the

individual rights, “not “collective” rights, or rights that may be exercised only through participation in some corporate body” (Agresti). So by allowing there to be gun free zones it is allowing for infringement on a constitutional right.

Approach 2: Clearances, schools decide gun policies

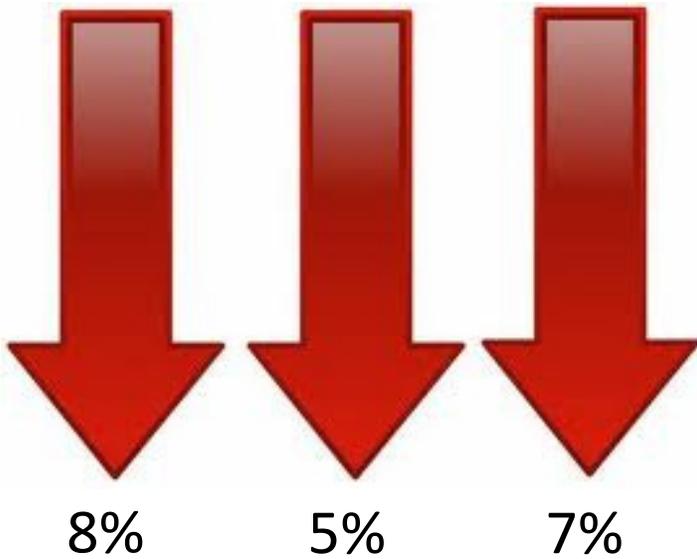
As adults in the United States of America, college students are guaranteed certain rights under the Constitution, one of which is the right to bear arms. This amendment holds in particular the power of allowing individuals to defend themselves. In many situations, victims need help within seconds, while assistance is still minutes away. By allowing firearms on campus, students would be able to defend themselves and their peers from violent attackers, and potentially end the attack before others are harmed. However, in a college setting, the unregulated possession of firearms could lead to potential dangers, including theft and misuse. Universities should have the right to decide and regulate their own firearm policies in order to prevent the potential dangers that come with it. One solution for universities to address these problems would be to require students to undergo firearm safety training. Training would ensure that students who are in possession of firearms know how to properly use and store them.

Universities could also require an application process in order to carry on campus. An application process for firearms will allow only those who are responsible members of the community, and those who are serious about carrying firearms on campus, to do so. Additionally, universities could require mental health screenings to ensure only those who are not a danger to themselves or others possess firearms.



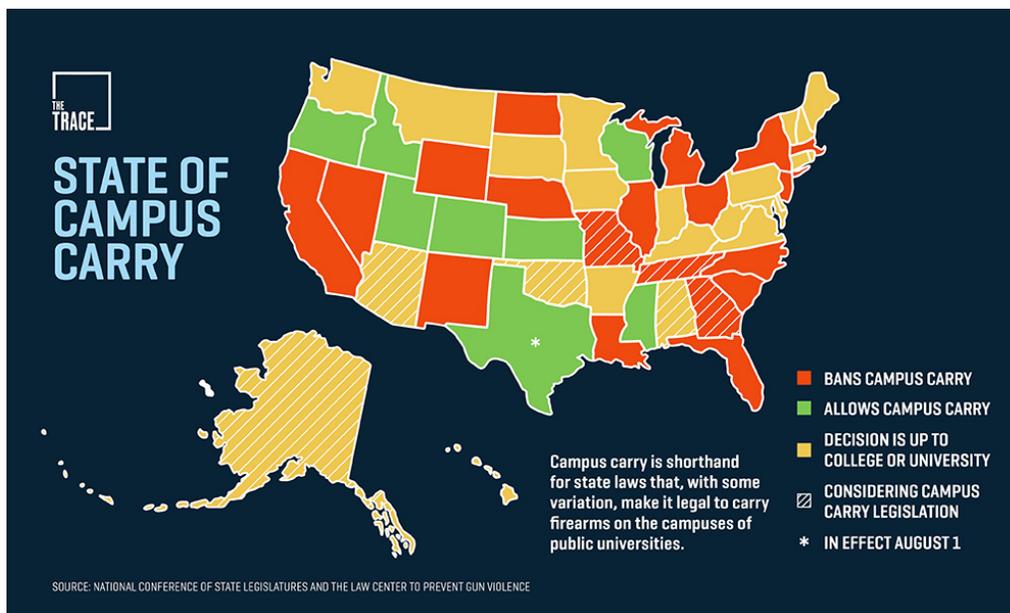
However, implementing these policies would have increased costs and responsibilities for universities. Should anything go wrong with the firearms, the university is responsible for it, as it allowed firearms to be on campus. Additionally, the university would have to pay for new programs to enforce the firearm policies, provide the firearms training classes, and implement the application process.

Some studies have shown a decrease in crime rates in areas where open and concealed handling of firearms is legal: murders down 8%, rapes down 5%, and aggravated assaults down 7%. Meanwhile, more and more schools have been legalizing the ownership of firearms on campus.



In order to ensure a sense of safety on college campuses, schools should implement stricter and more consistent firearm regulations, permitting responsible, well-trained individuals to have firearms on campus. These individuals would have the autonomy to immediately provide security to their colleagues in

situations in which with every passing minute of inaction, the threat to life increases.



What We Can Do

What Can Be Done?	Benefits	Drawbacks
<p>Colleges and universities should require the same firearm training for all individuals seeking gun possession on campus at a specified course fee.</p>	<p>Mandatory gun training and education courses ensure a uniform knowledge of safe gun use and ownership, enforcing a level of consistency throughout the school population and a expressing a clear message of the school's regulations.</p>	<p>Attending the gun courses and undergoing training will require an additional cost to prospective gun owners including the time they spend in it and the fee to attend it, which could provide financial hardship to these individuals.</p>
<p>Colleges and universities should implement mental health screenings every school year for all gun owners.</p>	<p>This measure may theoretically decrease the likelihood of suicides and the aggressive use of firearms towards student and staff members by restricting ownership to those deemed mentally healthy.</p>	<p>These screening will come at a higher cost to the university, which will have to shoulder the cost of the screenings. There also may be difficulty in drawing the line between which conditions fall where in respect to ability to wield a gun.</p>
<p>Colleges and universities should allow firearm ownership to individuals who apply and are in good standing with the school.</p>	<p>An application process will increase the likelihood that owners are responsible and serious about carrying a firearm while also implementing a quantitative and thus objective approach in determining eligibility.</p>	<p>An application process limits a sense of equality within the college population with the possibility of rejecting some applicants while accepting others. In essence, this creates an "elite" group of gun owners in comparison to those deemed to not be in good standing.</p>

Approach 3:

As the debate of gun control and its many varying issues rage on, there are many questions still floating around the controversy. While there are pros and cons to every situation, the cons of carrying weapons, especially on campus, seem to stack up more and more as research and past and current events are uncovered and thrust into the public eye. Is fighting fire with fire the answer?

There are myriad of statistics that continuously highlight that having a weapon (namely a handgun) on campus does not necessarily deter crime, but in fact increases the crime rate. Having a gun not only increases the crime rate, but according to Researchers at the Brennan Center for Justice, and despite other findings, there has been “a 10 percent average increase in violent crime in states that adopted right-to-carry laws.” Crimes such as robberies and sexual assaults are heightened with the presence of a gun, and even “premeditated attacks on a single person” tend to occur more often.



Adding a gun into the mix of the many other illegal and even legal products that inhabit many college campuses across the nation only make for a direr situation; now students have to protect themselves not only from outside forces, but also from students who they walk past every day. Permitting guns on college campuses (concealed or not) runs the threat of “interpersonal arguments [turning] into gun violence.” One can imagine getting into a heated argument with a friend or roommate, and they pull a gun on the other person, only escalating tensions and leading to deadly, irreversible consequences. However, unintentional homicide is not the only potential consequence of concealed weapons; concealed weapons can also lead to an increase in suicide among the student body. The presence of a gun on campus adds to students’ anxieties about school, social life, the future, etc., and provides students

with another resource to harm themselves. Unfortunately, students today have many outlets to commit suicide, why should a campus provide an additional one?

One can look past all these facts and perhaps focus on the main argument with concealed carry on college campuses: “Does having a weapon stop a mass shooting?” The answer and evidence associated with that question are increasingly negative. For example, “[the Federal Bureau of Investigation] looked at 160 active-shooter situations from 2000 to 2013 and found only one case where an armed civilian intervened to stop an attack that was underway,” that one person being a United States marine.



The inclusion of guns on college campuses is more trouble than what it is ultimately worth; there are many other situations where having a weapon did not deter crime, but catalyzed it. Guns do not belong on college campuses, and should not

be given to students regardless of the threats. While dangerous situations have the potential to rise, it is better to leave the use of guns to the professionals.



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