

Firearms on college campus essay sample



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There has been an on going debate about whether or not college students and/or professors should be allowed to carry firearms on campus. The Law allows each state to determine if concealed weapons are allowed to be carried on campus.

Many advocates of firearms are in agreement that firearms should be allowed on campus. In the past years, there have been shootings on college campuses that killed many and injured many. Allowing those who are licensed and trained to carry firearms on campus would seemingly act as a deterrent to those who may have ill intentions and often are carrying illegal firearms. With the proper training and education on firearms, students and professors would have the ability to neutralize a potential threat and have the ability to protect themselves and those around them. Understanding that it is the duty of law enforcement to protect all of our citizens, it has become very clear that they can not be everywhere and response time to a life threatening situation is not always ideal. Many argue that students and professors on college campuses should maintain focus on education and that allowing firearms on campuses may cause distractions.

Take the Virginia Tech massacre on April 16th, 2007(1) as an example. In two shooting sprees that happened roughly two hours apart, a student at the university shot and killed 32 people and wounded a number of others before turning the gun on himself. If a trained and educated student or professor had been in possession of a firearm, many lives could have been saved. There have been many debates about allowing students to carry firearms. Many of the most common debates about why firearms should not be allowed on campus are easy to respond to: Answer: Studies* show that 90%

of suicides are committed in the home. Because most college students over the age of twenty-one (the minimum age to obtain a concealed handgun license in most states) live off campus, allowing concealed carry on college campuses would have very little impact on the ability of college students to possess firearms in their homes and, therefore, little to no impact on the overall number of suicides by college students.

*“ Youth and Adolescent Suicide: A Guide for Educators,” Oregon Resiliency Project, University of Oregon, 2003; After Suicide: A Ray of Hope for Those Left Behind, Eleanora Betsy Ross, 2001 NOTE: At the University of Texas—a major university with over 50, 000 students—a quick comparison of campus housing statistics and concealed handgun licensing statistics reveals that there would likely be no more than ten to twenty concealed handgun license holders living in on-campus housing [pic]Argument: Guns on campus would distract from the learning environment. Answer: Ask anyone in a ‘ right to carry’ state when he or she last noticed another person carrying a concealed handgun. The word ‘ concealed’ is there for a reason. Concealed handguns would no more distract college students from learning than they currently distract moviegoers from enjoying movies or office workers from doing their jobs. “ In most states with ‘ shall-issue’ concealed carry laws, the rate of concealed carry is about 1%. That means that one person out of 100 is licensed to carry a concealed handgun. Therefore, statistically speaking, a packed 300-seat movie theater contains three individuals legally carrying concealed handguns, and a shopping mall crowded with 1, 000 shoppers contains ten individuals legally carrying concealed handguns.

Students who aren't too afraid to attend movies or go shopping and who aren't distracted from learning by the knowledge that a classmate might be illegally carrying a firearm shouldn't be distracted from learning by the knowledge that a classmate might be legally carrying a firearm." Answer: The vulnerability of dorms to theft does not necessitate a campus-wide ban on concealed carry by licensed individuals. There are numerous other options, from community gun lockups to small, private gun safes that can be secured to walls, floors, bed frames, etc. NOTE: On most college campuses very few students of legal age to obtain a concealed handgun license still live in dorms. Even at the University of Texas—a major university with over 50, 000 students—a quick comparison of campus housing statistics and concealed handgun licensing statistics reveals that there would likely be no more than ten to twenty concealed handgun license holders living in on-campus housing. [pic]Argument: It's possible that a gun might go off by accident.

Answer: Accidental discharges are very rare—particularly because modern firearms feature multiple safety features and because a handgun's trigger is typically not exposed when it is concealed—and only a small fraction of accidental discharges result in injury. SCCC feels that it is wrong to deny citizens a right simply because that right is accompanied by a negligible risk. NOTE: Only about 2% of all firearm-related deaths in the U. S. are accidental, and most of those are hunting accidents and accidents involving firearms being openly handled in an unsafe manner. A person is five times more likely to accidentally drown, five times more likely to accidentally die in a fire, 29 times more likely to die in an accidental fall, and 32 times more likely to die

from accidental poisoning than to die from an accidental gunshot wound.

Answer: Before shall-issue concealed carry laws were passed throughout the United States, opponents claimed that such laws would turn disputes over parking spaces and traffic accidents into shootouts.

This did not prove to be the case. The same responsible adults—age twenty-one and above—now asking to be allowed to carry their concealed handguns on college campuses are already allowed to do so virtually everywhere else. They clearly do not let their emotions get the better of them in other environments; therefore, no less should be expected of them on college campuses. [pic]Argument: The college lifestyle is defined by alcohol and drug abuse. Why would any sane person want to add guns to that mix?

Answer: This is NOT a debate about keeping guns out of the hands of college students. Allowing concealed carry on college campuses would not change the rules about who can buy a gun or who can obtain a concealed handgun license. Every state that provides for legalized concealed carry has statutes prohibiting license holders from carrying while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Legalizing concealed carry on college campuses would neither make it easier for college students to obtain firearms nor make it legal for a person to carry a firearm while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Allowing concealed carry on college campuses would have no impact on the laws regulating concealed carry at bars and off-campus parties, the places where students (particularly students of legal age to obtain a concealed handgun license) are most likely to consume alcohol.

Argument: In an active shooter scenario like the one that occurred at Virginia Tech, a student or faculty member with a gun would only make things worse.

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Answer: What is worse than allowing an execution-style massacre to continue uncontested? How could any action with the potential to stop or slow a deranged killer intent on slaughtering victim after victim be considered ‘worse’ than allowing that killer to continue undeterred? Contrary to what the movies might have us believe, most real-world shootouts last less than ten seconds*. Even the real Gunfight at the O. K. Corral, a shootout involving nine armed participants and a number of bystanders, lasted only about thirty seconds and resulted in only three fatalities. It is unlikely that an exchange of gunfire between an armed assailant and an armed citizen would last more than a couple of seconds before one or both parties were disabled. How could a couple of seconds of exchanged gunfire possibly be worse than a ten-minute, execution-style massacre?

Argument: The job of defending campuses against violent attacks should be left to the professionals. Answer: Nobody is suggesting that concealed handgun license holders be charged with the duty of protecting campuses. What is being suggested is that adults with concealed handgun licenses be allowed to protect themselves on college campuses, the same way they’re currently allowed to protect themselves in most other unsecured locations.

Argument: Police officers typically spend four to five months in training; whereas, concealed handgun license holders usually spend one day or less.

Answer: Police officers do not spend four to five months learning to carry concealed handguns for self-defense; they spend four to five months learning to be police officers. Concealed handgun license holders are not police officers; therefore, they have no need of most of the training received

by police officers. Concealed handgun license holders don't need to know how to drive police cars at high speeds or how to kick down doors or how to conduct traffic stops or how to make arrests or how to use handcuffs. And concealed handgun license holders definitely don't need to spend weeks memorizing radio codes and traffic laws.

“ Contrary to what some opponents of concealed carry might claim, concealed handgun license holders don't need extensive tactical training because they are not charged with protecting the public—It's not their job to act like amateur, one-man SWAT teams. All a concealed handgun license holder needs to know is how to use his or her concealed handgun to stop an immediate threat of death or serious bodily harm, and that type of training CAN be accomplished in a few hours.” NOTE: In some states, such as Texas, the shooting test for a concealed handgun license differs very little from the annual re-qualification test for police officers. Argument: How are first responders supposed to tell the difference between armed civilians and armed assailants? Answer: This hasn't been an issue with concealed handgun license holders in other walks of life for several reasons. First and foremost, real-world shootouts are typically localized and over very quickly. It's not realistic to expect police to encounter an ongoing shootout between assailants and armed civilians. Second, police are trained to expect both armed bad guys AND armed good guys—from off-duty/undercover police officers to armed civilians—in tactical scenarios. Third, concealed handgun license holders are trained to use their firearms for self-defense.

They are not trained to run through buildings looking for bad guys.

Therefore, the biggest distinction between the armed assailants and the

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armed civilians is that the armed civilians would be hiding with the crowd, and the armed assailants would be shooting at the crowd. Answer: Among the thirty-six shall-issue' states*—states where local authorities cannot require qualified applicants to “ show a need” before the applicant is issued a concealed handgun license/concealed carry weapons permit—six states allow, without special provision, for any qualified person eighteen years or older to be issued a concealed handgun license. These states are Indiana, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and South Dakota. “ Based on the FBI/Department of Justice violent crime statistics for the year 2006, the crime rates for these seven states, when ranked with all fifty states and the District of Columbia, rank as follows:

- Indiana – 30
- Montana – 42
- South Dakota – 47
- New Hampshire – 48
- North Dakota – 50
- Maine – 51

“ Not only are Maine, North Dakota, New Hampshire, and South Dakota four of the five** U. S. states with the lowest crime rates, Montana has the tenth lowest crime rate, and Indiana isn't even in the top 50%. Clearly, these states' lenient concealed handgun laws are not breeding generations of young violent offenders. “ The extraordinarily low crime rates in these six states, coupled with the fact that these states have a combined population of only about 10, 900, 000 (approximately 1. 6 million less than the combined

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population of America's two largest cities—New York, NY, and Los Angeles, CA—and at approximately 1/3 the combined violent crime rate of those two cities) has led Students for Concealed Carry on Campus to focus on the majority of 'shall-issue' states where the minimum age to receive a concealed handgun license is twenty-one." *Alaska (licenses are offered but not required to carry a concealed handgun), Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming **Vermont is ranked at 49—the third least violent state. Vermont neither requires nor offers a license to carry a concealed handgun. [pic]Argument:

It is inconceivable that any logical person would believe that the answer to violence is more guns. Answer: One might have just as easily told Edward Jenner, the man who discovered in the late eighteenth century that the cowpox virus could be used to inoculate people against smallpox, 'It is inconceivable that any logical person would believe that the answer to disease is more viruses. Argument: The answer to bullets flying is not more bullets flying. Answer: Actually, the answer to bullets flying is almost always more bullets flying. That's why the police bring so many guns with them when they respond to a report of 'shots fired. Argument: The answer to school violence is prevention, not guns on campus. Answer: Prevention and preparedness are not mutually exclusive. In a perfect system, the two approaches to safety compliment each other. Preventive measures, such as

teaching students and faculty to watch for the warning signs of mental illness and providing counseling to disturbed students, can work hand in hand with preparative measures, such as developing campus alert systems, providing additional training to campus police, and allowing the same trained, licensed adults who legally carry concealed handguns when not on college campuses to do so on college campuses.

Answer: Though statistically safer than other comparable locations, college campuses play host to every type of violence found in the rest of society, from murder to assault to rape. The statistics suggest that allowing concealed carry on campus won't hurt and might help; therefore, there is no legitimate reason not to allow it. A free society does not deny the people a right unless there is empirical evidence that granting that right will do more harm than good. [pic]Argument: Some professors might be afraid to issue bad grades if they know that students could be carrying guns Answer: Why should professors be more afraid of issuing bad grades to students who want to carry guns LEGALLY than of issuing bad grades to students who might already be carrying guns ILLEGALLY? College campuses are open environments—they don't have controlled points of entry, metal detectors, or X-ray machines. In light of the fact that a person unconcerned with violating the rules can walk onto a college campus carrying pretty much anything he or she chooses, some professors might feel more comfortable about issuing bad grades if they knew they were allowed the means to defend themselves.

Argument: The last thing we need is a bunch of vigilantes getting into a shootout with a madman, particularly since it's been proven that trained

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police officers have an accuracy rate of only about 15-25% in the field

Answer: Citizens with concealed handgun licenses are not vigilantes. They carry their concealed handguns as a means of getting themselves out of harm's way, not as an excuse to go chasing after bad guys. Whereas police shooting statistics involve scenarios such as pursuits down dark alleys and armed standoffs with assailants barricaded inside buildings, most civilian shootings happen at pointblank range. In the Luby's Cafeteria massacre, the Columbine High School massacre, and the Virginia Tech massacre, the assailants moved slowly and methodically, shooting their victims from very close range. A person doesn't have to be a deadeye shot to defend himself or herself against an assailant standing only a few feet away(2).

For these reasons and many others, firearms should be permitted on campus.

The bottom line is that if the state allows someone to carry a firearm in public places, why should a college campus be any different?

Works Cited

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Tech_massacre

Virginia Tech massacre – Wikipedia, free encyclopedia 2. http://www.concealedcampus.org/common_arguments.php

Students for Concealed Carry on Campus – Supporting self-defense on Campus