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Hawkeyes should be allowed to protect themselves and others

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The “good guy with a gun” trope is one of the few that gets repeated to the point of redundancy because it’s actually true. A study published in 2018 by the Crime Prevention Research Center showed that concealed carry permit holders are even less likely than police officers to commit firearm violations. Civilian heroes such as Jack Wilson — who stopped a Texas church shooting earlier this month — have saved unarmed, innocent lives for generations.

In 2003, Colorado State University began allowing concealed carry on campus and saw a 60 percent decrease in reported crimes, according to records compiled by the Cato Institute. Elsewhere in the state, the University of Colorado did the opposite and reported crimes shot up by 35 percent, until 2012 when the state’s Supreme Court rightly called the ban unconstitutional and overruled it.

Every second matters in an active shooter situation. Death tolls soar when responsible gun owners are rendered defenseless and needlessly forced to wait for law enforcement to arrive. Gun-free zones are definitionally easy targets for the psychotic rampages of mass shooters. The UI doesn’t have constitutional legitimacy to prevent adults in good legal standing from taking precautions to protect themselves and the people around them.

Fortunately, the U.S. is a civil society in which violence is rare, with generally low crime rates that have been declining for decades. Meanwhile, rates of gun ownership have soared — particularly among women and minorities. Allowing concealed carry on campus would be an effective deterrent against rape, sexual assault, and police brutality. Nothing empowers a woman more than having a gun in her purse.

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During his 2016 presidential campaign, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., raised the salient point that restricting use and access to firearms is a futile effort which merely hinders the rights of law-abiding citizens.

“You can pass all the gun laws you want,” Rubio said. “Criminals don’t follow the law. That’s why they’re called criminals.”

The brilliant framers of the U.S. Constitution did not create the right to keep and bear arms for self-defense. As their intellectual predecessor John Locke argued, this unalienable right predates

governments — including university bureaucracies. The Framers were simply wise and virtuous enough to recognize its existence.

I'm not advocating turning this campus into Red Dead Redemption when guys dueled over insults and cute girls. Of course, there should be reasonable barriers to getting a concealed-carry permit, and Iowa has them. State law requires that concealed-carry permit holders be 21 years old, pass a strict background check, and complete an online course. (Even more should be done by requiring an in-person training session for permits, but that's for another day.)

Iowa should join the 12 states that mandate that public universities allow concealed carry on their campuses. There are no documented incidents of gun violence on one of these campuses perpetrated by someone with a concealed-carry permit.

This isn't a primarily ideological argument; this is about protecting our campus. If the UI wants to ensure the safety of its students, it will take the state up on its offer and allow Hawkeyes the right the Constitution already grants them.