



## **Women should have access to concealed weapons**

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The controversy over the Public Safety attack-prevention tips list highlights the broader debate at the state level concerning the right to carry a concealed weapon on college campuses.

Everyone from Sean Hannity to Cosmopolitan recognized the tips as impractical, ridiculous and demeaning. And it would be equally demeaning to limit a woman's options when it comes to deterring attackers, namely taking away her right to carry a weapon.

Women should not have to resort to physical self-deprecation or focus on making themselves feel less "attractive" in order to protect themselves. After all, the attacker is the one who should be facing consequences, not the woman he targets.

"The 10 tips were considered last resort options when all other defense methods have been exhausted," the website now reads.

Despite its exclusion, having a concealed weapon is one of those other defense methods – one that should be recognized by the university as well as those state legislators considering a policy change.

The context for this as a practical defense method lies in the fact that in the vast majority of cases, the criminal is deterred after someone brandishes a firearm or fires a warning shot.

While the number of incidents can be exaggerated, a paper from the CATO Institute published last year shows that even in the most conservative of estimates, guns are used as means of self-defense in hundreds of thousands of cases a year.

According to one study, nearly 10 percent of self-defense cases involve women defending against abuse or sexual assault.

It's the classic self-defense argument for a reason – it works.

A report from the FBI, Secret Service and the Department of Education shows that since 1900, all types of crimes are on the rise on college campuses. The more students who attend, the greater the number of incidents.

The CATO paper also shows that in 2008 there were 3,287 rapes, 5,026 assaults, 4,562 robberies and 60 killings across college campuses in the U.S. Combined across all colleges nationwide, there are an average nine sexual assaults per day.

Women need access to concealed weapons in order to protect themselves against such attacks.

One of the most widely reported instances involving a concealed carry owner was in December 2007 when Jeanne Assam shot a gunman at New Life Church in Colorado Springs.

The gunman, who intended not to sexually attack but to kill, had two handguns, an assault rifle and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition, according to CSPD.

He had killed two people the day before and two others in the parking lot. Uncontested, he could have caused mass casualties.

Many, like Rep. Joe Salazar, D-Thornton, think women should not be allowed access to such life-saving measures.

During the debate over concealed weapons on college campuses, Salazar sparked backlash after saying, "It's why we have call boxes, it's why we have safe zones, it's why we have the whistles. Because you just don't know who you're gonna be shooting at," he said, according to The Denver Post.

"And you don't know if you feel like you're gonna be raped, or if you feel like someone's been following you around or if you feel like you're in trouble when you may actually not be, that you pop out that gun and you pop ... pop a round at somebody," he added. (He later issued a formal apology.)

Unfortunately, while rape whistles and call boxes are useful, they are nowhere near as effective as a concealed weapon – especially when a woman feels like she's going to be raped.

And as a study from the 1990s showed, only in about 8 percent of cases where a law-abiding citizen brandishes a weapon or fires a warning shot is the attacker injured.

The debate over allowing concealed weapons is not about safety but about power, and women should not feel powerless in this debate but should be respected enough to be given access to concealed weapons.