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At the University of Maryland, there is currently a ban against the concealed carry of weapons, even by students who possess these firearms legally. In Maryland, the state laws require that in order to purchase a handgun or assault weapon legally, the purchaser must go through a training course about the safety of firearms in order to obtain a license, receive a background check from the state police, and go through a seven day waiting period before physically obtaining the weapon (Giffords Law Center). More specifically, in order for a person in Maryland to obtain a concealed carry permit, the person must be at least twenty-one years old, undergo a sixteen hour training in which the person receives at least a 70% accuracy on gun safety and proficiency, can not have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor where he or she was imprisoned for more than one year, can not have been convicted of a crime involving a dangerous substance, and can not presently be an alcoholic or a drug addict (Maryland State Police). In College Park, Maryland, over the last decade, there have been sixteen accounts of rape, one account of criminal homicide, thirty-nine accounts of robbery, fifty-seven accounts of aggravated assault, 3,453 accounts of larcency, and 520 accounts of burglary (University of Maryland Police Department). Additionally, other campuses that allow concealed carry have certain restrictions, including prohibition in dorms and Greek life houses (Bogost). Based off of these statistics, and the requirements that are necessary in order to obtain a concealed carry permit, students at the University of Maryland who legally possess a firearm and a concealed carry permit should be allowed to execute this right on campus due to the fact that such laws prevent the campus from becoming a target for violence, protect students, specifically females, from assault, and allow students to execute their second amendment rights.

By allowing students and faculty to carry concealed weapons, universities deter criminals from engaging in acts of violence, such as mass shootings or other forms of massacre. In 2007, Virginia Tech, a campus that did not utilize a concealed carry law, experienced a mass shooting, due to its lack of security (Trent). An article opposing concealed carry laws recognized the idea that “if college campuses are among the few venues where guns are prohibited...then they will become targets for attacks” (Bogost). Additionally, another article stated that Americans use guns in self-defense between 500,000 and three million times, each year (Swearer). Based on these statistics, it is reasonable to conclude that carrying a concealed weapon is an effective way to conduct self-defense in the face of a mass tragedy, such as the shooting at Virginia Tech. At the University of Maryland, permitting students to carry concealed weapons would deter those with thoughts to engage in an act of this nature. One advocate for the permission of concealed carry on college campuses stated that it is comforting to know that “[he] has the ultimate responsibility for [his] safety” (Phillipps).

Second, allowing students to carry a concealed weapon would specifically have a significant impact on women’s safety on campus. Statistics show that at least one in five women will be sexually assaulted during her time in college (Hill). At the University of Maryland, over the last decade, there have been sixteen recorded rape charges (University of Maryland Police Department). According to one female student at the University of Texas, she and other women “felt helpless in the face of sexual assault before they carried a weapon” (Okafor). Additionally, another source stressed the significance of the lifelong consequences that sexual assault can have on victims (Hill). For example, trust issues, guilt, shame, denial, persistent fear, depression and isolation can affect victims of sexual assault for years after an attack (Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs). Students at the University of Maryland that were attempting to bring concealed carry to campus in 2016 stated that students that were interviewed believed that “self-defense was a right” (Grant). Providing students with the opportunity to carry a concealed weapon provides them with the opportunity to protect themselves against sexual assault.

Finally, students should have the same rights as other citizens, according to the second amendment. A justification for legalizing concealed carry on college campuses in Georgia is that “college students face the same threats all Georgians face and they, too, should have the right to fight back” (Hill). One article addressed the second amendment as “a fundamental part of the nation’s scheme of ordered liberty” (Swearer). Additionally, in District of Columbia vs. Heller in 2008, the Supreme Court “included both concealed carry and open carry in its definition of ‘bear arms’” (Greenlee). Based off of this definition, Americans have the right, as defined by the Constitution and confirmed by the Supreme Court, to carry a concealed weapon. Additionally, college-aged students have the ability to participate in the military and defend the country, so they should also have the ability to protect themselves (Hill). Since students at the University of Maryland have the same rights as other Americans, they should inherently possess and be able to freely execute the right to bear arms.

Opponents of concealed carry laws argue primarily that the possession of guns on campus creates an unsafe environment, in which free speech is discouraged, and even censored. One opponent stated that free speech is stifled when guns are allowed because of the “fear of inciting angry students to draw their guns” (Bogost). In reality, students that possess concealed carry permits must undergo background checks through the state police, meaning they are mentally stable and unlikely to lash out due to a difference in opinions (Giffords Law Center). Additionally, “approximately 1 million defensive gun uses likely occur every year, far outpacing the number of times guns are used to illegally kill or injure others” (Swearer). This fact supports the assumption that guns are used in more of a defensive manner than an offensive one.

At the University of Maryland, the crime rates, and the qualifications that are required to obtain a concealed carry permit further justify why students should be allowed to carry concealed weapons in order to prevent the campus from becoming a target for mass violence, protect students from sexual assault, and allow students to execute their second amendment right to the same extent as other Americans. Overall, students deserve the right to protect themselves, whether or not they are on a college campus.

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