

Opinion: Guns on campus? You won't notice

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

If the Idaho Legislature shows some good sense, as well as some courage, and allows concealed carry permit holders to carry their firearms on campus, the most likely result will be absolutely nothing.

Concealed carry permit holders carry firearms all over Idaho every day without incident. And there is no reason to expect a different result on a college campus. Fear mongering in the Idaho Senate aside, honest, sane, law-abiding Idahoans carrying legally concealed firearms on a college campus will go by unnoticed.

Sen. Elliot Werk, D-Boise, revealed the intellectually vacuous depths that liberals will plumb when attempting to rally hysteria against the Second Amendment. He fancifully predicted that suicides would go up among Idaho's college students.

"Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for college students," he intoned, "And 85 percent of suicide attempts with guns are fatal, compared to 2 percent with drug overdoses. That's where I think the real casualties of this bill come in."

As any remotely competent therapist will tell you, many, if not most, suicide attempts by drug overdose are not really suicide attempts. They are really just suicide gestures that are in reality either appeals for help or simply efforts at getting attention. Gestures rarely are fatal.

But using a firearm to commit suicide is no gesture. When someone uses a gun, they're serious about the end result. The difference is intent, not method.

Sen. Michelle Stennett, D-California on the Wood River, imagines that innocent bystanders will be slaughtered on the streets by stray bullets fired from citizens' pistols.

"Even with extensive training, police officers say they hit the target less than 30 percent of the time," she said. "Enhanced carry only requires some initial training. So what are the chances of them hitting the correct target, and what if they miss and shoot someone else?"

Can anyone recall the last time that an innocent bystander was killed by a policeman's bullet in Idaho?

The fact is that good, law-abiding citizens carrying guns endanger no one.

If anything, allowing permitted conceal carry on college campuses will help guard against mass shootings. While we defend just about everything else of value with armed men, when it comes to educational institutions, we protect them with "gun-free zones."

Opponents of concealed carry, or just opponents of the Second Amendment, often claim that there has never been a mass shooting prevented by an armed citizen. This is quite difficult to prove, because how can you prove what might have happened when it didn't? It's mostly speculation.

The only people who are licensed to predict imaginary futures are liberals. An example would be the often-repeated claim that Barack Obama's economic stimulus package of five years ago prevented a second Great Depression. As lousy as the economy is today, it would have been even worse without Obama.

Liberals can babble gibberish like that and get away with it. But whenever someone states the obvious truth that the Sandy Hook and Virginia Tech massacres were only possible because the only armed person in both circumstances was the crazy bad guy, scorn is generously heaped.

But in fact, there have been several occasions of mass killings stopped by armed citizens. Most recently, a madman started shooting up a Portland, Ore., shopping mall and killed two people before Nick Meli confronted him. Meli was armed with a pistol. The gunman fled from Meli and shortly thereafter committed suicide. We can only guess how many he would have killed if not for Meli and his pistol.

In San Antonio, Texas, in 2012, Jesus Manual Garcia opened fire in a movie theater but was killed by an off-duty policeman before any innocent life was lost. In Winnemucca, Nev., in 2008, a gunman opened fire in a crowded restaurant, killing two before he was himself killed by a man carrying a concealed pistol.

In Colorado Springs in 2007, an armed woman shot dead a madman who attacked her church and killed two.

This is only a partial list of mass killings prevented by armed citizens, but it does show that armed citizens stop killers more effectively than signs.

So, can we expect read about similar acts of heroism by gun owners on Idaho college campuses? I would expect not.

But I consider the possibility of something like that occurring to be at least as likely as the scare mongering scenarios cooked up by Idaho's few and widely scattered liberals.

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