

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,

My name is Alex Read and I am a junior mechanical engineering student at Montana State University. I'm from Washington, but I have to abide by Montana state law.

Normally, that is great. Montana laws are usually centered about the rights of the people, but not in the case that HB 240 will rectify. Currently, students will be kicked out of the university for carrying a weapon they are licensed to carry. Why is it that we can carry concealed weapons in malls and restaurants, but not on campus? Especially when we have the right to use force when necessary to protect ourselves and others from harm?

Schools are highly populated areas where guns are guaranteed not to be found. They are enticing targets for murderous people. Because the people will be unable to defend themselves. When concealed carry is allowed, nobody knows who has a gun, so nobody has to be intimidated. Yet men wouldn't have to get mugged near Romney gym, like somebody did two years ago, and women wouldn't be defenseless while walking home at night.

Proper restrictions should be enacted, like penalizing students who do not keep their firearms concealed in a holster or locked in a safe place at all times, or who threaten other students, but the university shouldn't have the final word on Montanans' protected rights.

NOBODY actually on campus during a life-threatening emergency would be able to do anything to stop it. Not a single person. Only the police are allowed to have guns. Student security officers, which I was once, are not allowed to carry any type of weapon at all. It is a violation of policy and they will be fired if they are discovered with a weapon. Even they are useless to protect anybody! If a student or faculty member on campus is ever faced with a dangerous situation, the best they could do would be to curl up into a ball and plug their ears and hope it goes away soon!

Students should be able to carry concealed weapons for their own safety and the safety of others. If police do not or cannot respond to an emergency, citizens have the right to protect themselves wherever they are, because preventable crimes don't take as long as police responses take.

All of us here are normal, good citizens. We are here to tell you that this law needs to be changed. Proper laws protect citizens, but overbearing laws oppress them and endanger them!

Thank you,

Alexander Read, of Poulsbo WA

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