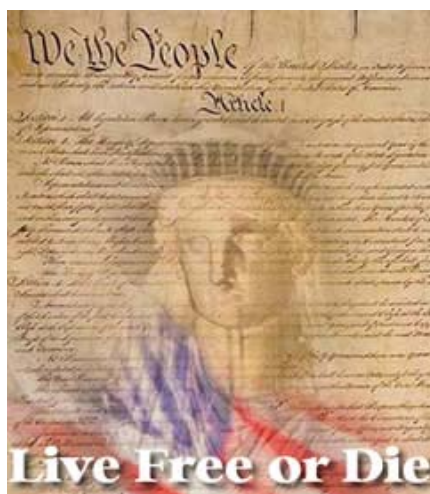


OUR VIEW: Sheriff says he'll undermine gun ban (vote in poll)

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The Colorado State University [Board of Governors](#) voted unanimously Tuesday to place students at both of its campuses in harm's way with a sweeping weapons ban law-abiding citizens will obey and criminals will ignore.

Larimer County [Sheriff James Alderden](#), outraged by the ban, told The Gazette's opinion department he will undermine it in the interest of student safety.

CSU-Fort Collins [Police Chief Wendy Rich-Goldsmith](#), a relative newcomer to the campus, supports the ban.

"I have told the CSU police chief I will not support this in any way," Sheriff Alderden told The Gazette. "If anyone with one of my permits gets arrested for concealed carry at CSU, I will refuse to book that person into my jail. Furthermore, I will show up at court and testify on that person's behalf, and I will do whatever I can to discourage a conviction. I will not be

a party to this very poor decision."

Though each CSU campus has its own police department, Alderden issues all cops on the Fort Collins campus a deputy sheriff's commission card. He also runs the county's jail, which campus police use after making arrests.

Alderden said ban advocates have been unable to cite a single study or statistic to show that students will be safer as a result of a weapons ban. He's convinced they will be much less safe as a result of the ban, which will leave most students defenseless. The ban establishes the campuses as "soft targets," meaning armed criminals will have a reasonable expectation their intended victims aren't armed.

"There are volumes of [statistical and anecdotal data](#) that show populations are safer when law-abiding citizens are permitted to carry concealed weapons," Alderden said.

Six years after Alderden began issuing permits, he noticed the homicide rate in his jurisdiction had dropped.

At CSU-Fort Collins, the ban includes pepper spray, in quantities greater than an ounce, and Tasers.

"This ban, which is broad and encompassing, basically denies students at the Fort Collins campus any defensive capacity at all," Alderden said. "It's a weapons-free zone for law-abiding people, and it won't do a single thing to keep armed criminals off of campus. It will only ensure them a lot of defenseless victims. The people who did this are lost in their own world of ideological liberalism. You would think people involved in academia would want to deal in data and experience, but this has been all about emotion."

Alderden said he realized the sentiment against self-defense is based in emotion after speaking with a public school teacher who asked him to stop issuing concealment permits. He showed her data that prove concealed carry reduces crime. He told her concealed carry would help reduce violent crime in Fort Collins and the rest of Larimer County — a sentiment shared by El Paso County Sheriff Terry Maketa and a growing number of ranking law enforcement officials regarding their own jurisdictions.

"I made the whole case, based in provable facts. The teacher said, and I quote, 'I don't care about the facts.'"

She only cared about her emotional response," Alderden said.

(Please vote in poll to the right, in red type. Must vote to see results. Thanks!)

The student Senate of the Fort Collins campus opposed the ban by a 23-1 vote. That means CSU governors, and administrators who pushed for the ban, don't seem to care what their customers think. The Student Senate at Pueblo approved the ban, only after administrators said "weapons" did not include Tasers or pepper spray.

"God forbid we have something like the tragedy at Virginia Tech at one of these campuses," Alderden said, referring to a notorious shooting spree in which a lunatic wantonly killed for hours, while a gun ban assured him no students or faculty would shoot back.

Alderden questions the legality of the ban, saying the legislature never discussed excluding college campuses when it passed a shall-issue concealed-carry law in 2003. The law requires county sheriff's to issue concealment permits to law-abiding residents without felonies, misdemeanor domestic violence records, or other disqualifying conditions. Furthermore, he said students who ignore the ban won't have legal problems if they don't get caught.

"If it's properly concealed, so that nobody sees the weapon, it probably won't be a problem," Alderden said.

In the event a concealed weapon is needed for defense of self or others, it would become evident to law enforcement. In that unlikely event, Alderden said, safety trumps legal concerns.

"They say it's better to be judged by 12 than carried by six," Alderden said.

That's the advice of a [lawman](#) with a record of reducing crime. The ban is the work of academic ideologues, who theorize about safety and crime. Hope and pray the [academicians](#) don't find themselves begging forgiveness someday, in the wake of a horrible crime. — [Wayne Laugesen](#), editorial page editor, for the editorial board

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