Opinion

Knight Life Publication Policy
Got opinions? Disagree with something we've said? Just want to get your say in the paper?
Write us!

Direct letters to the Editor to:
Knight Life
Loy Norrix
606 East Kilgore
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
-OR-
Submit to Room B-10
-OR-
E-mail to pankoptl@kalamazo.k12.mi.us

Guidelines:
-250 words or less
-Contain author's name, phone number, and address

Right to withhold:
-As space permits
-Guest columns
-Personal opinions
-Contains libel or obscenities
-Disrupts school environment
-Invades privacy of others

Notes to reader:
-Any photography that has been manipulated will be labeled a photo illustration.
-Knight Life will publish a formal correction of any factual error made in a previous issue.

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Guns in Schools Would Yield No Positive Results

-Staff Editorial

It used to be that the mere thought of allowing guns or other weapons on school property was completely outrageous. Schools in Michigan have always worked hard to keep weapons out of our learning institutions. However, under the recently proposed House Bill No. 5162, teachers, administrators and staff would be permitted to carry a concealed pistol on school grounds if approved by a principal. While this legislation is intended to decrease the possibility of violence in school, in reality it would only escalate the chance for violence.

State Representative Dave Agema introduced this bill, citing it as a means of "disaster-preparedness." If passed, he believes the bill would offer protection to students and assist in preventing an attack similar to those at Columbine or Virginia Tech. But how is stocking our schools full of gun-wielding teachers supposed to reduce the possibility of violence? If anything, allowing teachers to bear arms on school grounds would prompt more violence.

Even if teachers are able to carry a gun, that doesn't necessarily mean that they would be adequately trained in operating it. Although teachers who opt to carry guns would be subject to thorough training and have to meet specific qualifications, there is still no guarantee that they will be able to use a gun properly in a high risk situation. Teachers are already expected to educate and guide their students, while also having to act under an immense amount of stress. Educators should not have to face the ethical dilemma that would arise when they are expected to use violence against a student that they have been responsible to educate. Adding the responsibility of wielding a gun to their duties is unreasonable, and quite ridiculous. The risks of harming innocent people are just too high.

Allowing teachers to carry guns in school also brings up the issue of where the guns should be kept. If teachers were to carry a concealed weapon on them, it would be fairly simple for a student to overpower them and take the gun. This scenario would not only put the teacher in danger, but the rest of the student population as well. On the other hand, keeping the guns in a safe does not offer a much better solution. The chances of reaching the safe, unlocking it, and loading the gun in time to defend the students are slim. Keeping the guns in one spot outside the classroom would also make it an easy place for attackers to target.

In addition to allowing teachers to carry guns on school grounds, the proposed legislation would also allow parents and guardians who already possess proper gun permits to carry concealed guns on school property while picking up or dropping off a student. If teachers, administrators, staff, and parents are all allowed to carry guns on school property, what's to stop students from believing that they too have the right to bear arms in school? The number of students bringing guns to school would probably increase, as many would feel that they needed to be able to personally protect themselves.

If we need more protection in our schools, then we should employ more professionally trained police officers. Allowing guns in school by anyone other than police officers who have been properly trained increases the risk of people being hurt or killed. Instead of opening up the school to guns we should work on ways to enforce keeping guns out of schools. If protecting students from attacks in schools has become so urgent that some have resorted to suggesting we arm teachers with guns, then maybe we should look into installing metal detectors at school entrances and employing more security and police officers in the schools.

Permitting guns on school property would not make the school safer or more conducive to learning in any way. School is supposed to provide a safe learning environment for students, and allowing guns on school premises would leave many students feeling unsettled and unsafe. All measures should be taken to ensure that guns are not legally permitted in our schools.

First Impressions

Cristina Flocea
Staff Writer

Have you ever asked yourself how long would you be able to survive far away from your home, family and your friends?

If you have ever thought about this, and you think it would be difficult, I agree with you.

Fortunately, this is something that I am now experiencing and I can easily say that being an exchange student is not only hard, but also exhausting and frustrating. It is being away from everything you are used to. It means doing something exciting and new.

I was born in Moldova, a very small country located in Eastern Europe. Coming to the American world, I was shocked at the huge dimensions. Everything is larger here: roads, cars and even portions of ice-cream!

I like all these larger sizes and I'm trying, as much as possible, to do what an exchange student should do, to adapt and to make the cultural exchange between the countries.

A vital condition for successfully completing my mission is to communicate and to interact with people that surround me. It is easy to do that because Americans are very polite, and what I like most is that they smile every time I'm looking at them. To me, this means that they are very friendly and cute. I like the way Americans listen to me, and I am impressed when they show interest in learning more about my country.

Even though I've been here for only four weeks, I am able to say that the first week of school, was the craziest one in my life. Can you imagine the difference between 400 students, where I come from, and approximately 1,400 students at Loy Norrix?

It is an immense change!

The large, crowded, noisy halls are hard to get used to, and I still have problems with it. It is difficult, and I get nervous looking for my classroom when I don't know even where to go to find it.

It is complicated, but at the same time, challenging to survive as a student in Loy Norrix High School with a lot of different people and different ways of doing things. It would seem that I need the powerful abilities of a fighter in order to survive here.

However, for the first time in my life, I have the opportunity to do something different from what I've done in the past. It is the first time I can choose my classes that aren't required and I am very happy I can finally study subjects that interest me. This of course wouldn't be possible if my counselor, Rebecca Learner, who is a wonderful person, hadn't helped me so extensively.

I love changing things about myself, and I am trying as hard as I can to enjoy my new style of life. This style is so different from that in Moldova, where I was nine weeks ago.

I am now sure that coming to Kalamazoo was the best choice for me and my future. I will never regret the things that I have done and that I'll do in the next eight months and I hope to become a valuable part of American society.

Differences between Americans and Moldovans	
Americans	Moldovans
CLOTHES	
*Jeans *Shirts *Tennis shoes	*Dresses *Skirts *Heels *Jewelry
MEDICINE	
*New technologies *Painless dental service	*Old technology *Dental services use novicane only occassionally *Low quality
FOOD	
*Spices *Variety *Lots of hamburgers and salads	*No spices *No variety *Plain food *Pizza with mayonaise
MONEY	
*Dollars	*Lei
ID BADGES	
*Why do Americans have to wear them???	*We don't have such things in our schools!

KNIGHTS SPEAK OUT

Should teachers carry guns in school?

Marcos Loveland

Marcos Loveland, freshman

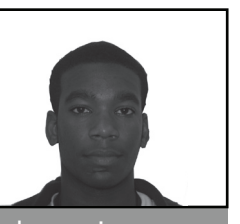
"Maybe. If the guns were securely protected, so a kid won't be able to get it."

Sharon Caron

Sharon Caron, social studies

"No. The guns set students and teachers against each other. I think metal detectors should be used."

Lance Clark



Lance Clark, senior

"Awh no, definitely no, because then the students would feel they want to bring guns. It would be very dangerous."

Kaileigh Galbraith

Kaileigh Galbraith, sophomore

"Yeah, because it's threatening. It keeps people in line."