



Should we Arm our Teachers?



Prepared by the League of Women Voters of Illinois

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Will More Guns in Illinois' Schools make Students and Teachers Safer?

In the spring of 2018, a group called **Illinois Carry** presented a document called the *Student Safety Protection Resolution* and posted it on their website. They asked their members to approach local school boards for passage of this resolution. The purpose was to present it to the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Resolution Committee for consideration during their annual conference in Chicago in November of 2018. **Illinois Carry** also provided Presentation Notes for the resolution. While many school boards were opposed to the resolution, about ten districts did ask to put it on the agenda for debate on the floor for the IASB delegates.

If this resolution passes the delegate assembly, then the IASB will work to support and advocate for legislation which provides local school boards the option of developing safety plans which may include administrators, faculty, and teachers to be trained and licensed to carry a firearm in school while students are present.

Illinoiscarry.com describes itself as “a website devoted to advancing your right to carry in Illinois. A not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing educational information about the lawful acquisition, possession, and carrying of firearms in Illinois as well as actively preserving, protecting, and advancing the Second Amendment Right to Carry for personal safety of self and others.”

Illinois currently prohibits the knowing possession or carrying of any firearm, stun gun, or taser on or about the person in any public or private elementary or secondary school, on the person or in a vehicle on the real property of any school, in any conveyance owned, leased or contracted by a school to transport students to or from school or a school related activity, or on the person in a vehicle or any public way within 1,000 feet of the real property comprising a school. There are some exceptions, including law enforcement and school security officers. This law would have to be changed if this resolution is passed.



Many people believe that there are alternative things that can be done like banning or restricting use of high power assault weapons and large clip ammunition to law enforcement and military, universal background checks, federal ban on interstate gun trafficking, extreme risk protection orders (Red Flag Laws), and funding for gun violence research.

What do the experts think?

The AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS and the NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION are two of the largest organizations representing education professionals. They oppose allowing guns into our schools and have consistently rejected calls to arm teachers.



Check these facts on the following websites:

Illinois Gun Violence Prevention Coalition: <https://ilgvp.com>
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America: <http://momsdemandaction.org>
Violence Policy Center: www.vpc.org
League of Women Voters of Illinois: www.lwvil.org

The VIOLENCE POLICY CENTER, a national educational organization working to stop death and injury, did a study in 2017 and found that FBI data show that private citizens use guns to harm themselves or others far more than to justifiably kill in self-defense. They also found that trained police officers had a 20% hit ratio in armed confrontations, meaning that only 20% of shots fired hit the intended target.


The DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY reports that between 2014 and 2016, its personnel lost a total of 228 firearms, many because they were not secured properly.



More Guns is not the Answer



- In 2017 a gunman opened fire at a Walmart in Colorado and several shoppers pulled out their handguns. Police said that delayed their investigation for more than five hours while they worked to identify the shooter by taking each individual with a firearm to compare with the surveillance video so they could eliminate them as a suspect.
- In 2011 in Arizona a shooter opened fire in a parking lot for a grocery store. He wounded 13 people, including Representative Gabby Giffords. A witness pulled out his handgun and almost shot the person who disarmed the shooter as he rounded the corner and thought he was the gunman.
- The chaos created in a school environment would make it hard to identify the shooter, especially if it was a student. It often takes a while before everyone knows exactly who the shooter is and how many are shooting. In addition, a student could take a weapon from a teacher or find weapons in storage.
- A 2006 article in *Archives of Pediatrics* (Miller) notes that students may be aware of where and how teachers keep their firearms and how to obtain access. Children are often aware of where their own parents store guns and more than one third reported handling their parent's guns without telling their parents. In addition, the vast majority of accidental shootings of children are done by children who found a gun belonging to a family member.

HANDS UP **What do Students and Teachers Say?**
 **DONT SHOOT**

"I wanted to go back to when blood hadn't stained the walls of our campus. But we couldn't go back. Even when people come up to us quietly to say thank you, you never know if they are just trying to shoot you at close range."

.....Emma González
Parkland survivor
New York Times Opinion 10/7/18

"I am strongly against gun violence. If teachers have guns, the shooter might target them first. It would make students and teachers anxious."

.....Nathan, 8th grade student
Naperville School District 203
Board Meeting 10/15/18

"Teachers do not want to carry a gun nor do they want to work in a building where others than police carry. I hope IASB would work on getting more funds to provide for more mental health professionals in schools."

.....Mark Bailey, 203 Teacher Assoc.
Naperville School Dist. 203
Board Meeting 10/15/18



Compiled by a League of Women Voters member who served 25 years on a suburban Illinois school board

League of Women Voters of Illinois Position on Gun Violence Prevention

To curb the proliferation of the private ownership of handguns and their irresponsible use, the League supports a ban on the further manufacture, sale, transportation and importation of handguns and their parts. The League advocates restricting [access](#) to automatic and semi-automatic assault type weapons. These weapons present a clear and unequivocal danger to public safety. The League believes that it is essential to restrict or prohibit the possession and sale, manufacture, importation and transportation of semi-automatic assault type weapons for private ownership. Additionally, the sale of ammunition for these weapons should be restricted or prohibited. The League favors restrictive legislation at both the state and federal levels.