IOWA LEGISLATURE TAKES A STAND
How the Parkland shooting affects Iowa laws

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After a school shooter left 17 students dead in Parkland, Florida, survivors of the incident have made what they want clear: legislative action.

The pro-gun restriction voices — many being Generation Z-ers getting their first taste of political activism — had their victories. In Florida, legislators have proposed the age to purchase a gun be raised and a three-day waiting period for most purchases of long guns, according to the Washington Post.

This action still falls short of the ban on assault weapons that these activists are pushing for.

Though states like Florida are moving toward gun restrictions, other states around the country, including Iowa, have taken to loosening gun laws.

On Wednesday, the proposed amendment passed through both the Iowa House and Senate — passing in the Senate Wednesday, 54-42, and in the House Monday, 94-3.

This action still falls short of the ban on assault weapons, The NRA has used Gaskill as an example of those who “can stop a bad guy with a gun.”

As of Wednesday, the proposed amendment passed through both the Iowa House and Senate — passing in the Senate Wednesday, 54-42, and in the House Monday, 94-3.

“[This bill] would make it, I think, significantly more difficult to implement any kind of sensible regulation,” Quirmbach said. “In other words, we’re going the wrong direction.

Since the bill would be an amendment to the Iowa Constitution, it requires the joint resolution to pass through both the House and Senate this legislative cycle and next as well be voted on by Iowa residents.

Quirmbach is in support of access to legitimate hunting weapons and permits for people with a need for self-defense. "I don't see any need for high capacity assault weapons,

"I don't see any particular need for high capacity magazines of the kind that were used in the Florida shooting and I think that there are some significant loopholes in the background check process.

Quirmbach is in the middle of working on a bill to address the background check process. Since he needs time to work through some technical issues, including making sure state violations are posted to the federal database properly, this bill won't see the floor until the next legislative session.

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Another aspect of gun violence issues in the U.S.
One month later, Parkland shooting still a driving force

A little over a month later, the events of the Parkland shooting seem to be in the past, but the aftershocks are far from over.

Florida has become a catalyst for many crucial events and raised a lot of questions for moving forward.

How has student activism grown because of school shootings?

The students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the scene of the shooting on February 14, have been active on social media and even partnered with mainstream news outlets encouraging other youth and adult supporters to take action.

Following these events, communities across the country staged schoolwide walkouts for youths' voices to be heard. They have even gone as far as organizing a national March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C. to protest gun violence, set to take place on March 24.

How has the shooting prompted legislation?

Florida governor Rick Scott signed into legislation a bill tightening gun control in the state of Florida, as well as setting provisions for arming school teachers. This is seen by many as a first step, but supporters of the movement view it as not enough.

Are they enough?

So far, new laws and debates have done little to improve the situation.

In fact, violence in schools has spiked since Parkland, and the daily average at the time of writing is around 70 total threats and incidents since February 14, as reported by the Educator's School Safety Network.

It does not seem to stop there either. On Tuesday, March 20, a student shot two students at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Only time will tell if new efforts will prove to be effective or if even further change is required to stop such catastrophes.

What actions were taken during and after the Parkland shooting?

The timeline released by the Broward County Sheriff’s Office details the radio traffic, including communications between officers responding to the scene and dispatch, providing some detail over the events that transpired. That being said, there were still details that were missing or unclear.

Alleged equipment malfunctions contributed to the confusion as communications became backed up and unclear with regards to information being relayed from dispatch to the officers on scene.

Deputies set up around the school, but because they had not received any clear further instruction, they did not advance into the school immediately, a move that has attracted controversy.

How was the fallout addressed?

Sheriff Scott Israel has faced countless questions regarding the response of the deputies responding on scene, including Scot Peterson, the officer assigned to the high school.

Much of the controversy stems from these reports, supported by surveillance footage, of Peterson waiting beside a stairwell outside the building and directing other deputies and law enforcement officers to “stay at least 500 feet away at this point.”

This decision to keep officers from entering the building may well have ended his career.

Directly following the incident, an internal affairs investigation was launched into the conduct of Peterson, who resigned almost immediately.

What does it all mean?

Where this became a problem is when communication breakdowns and problems to have strayed from procedure prohibited effective coordination between different agencies, thus prolonging the situation and putting more people in danger of becoming victims.

This risk has lead many to believe that Parkland was a disastrous series of mistakes, but as with every different situation, there is a different point of view.

How should a situation like this have been handled?

Deputy Chief Jacobs of ISU Police's Investigative Services division stated that “as a best practice, ISU Police does not comment on actions... by other law enforcement agencies during an incident such as Parkland, Florida.”

She explained that this is most often attributed to the fact that while the general premise of procedures may be similar, every department has its own unique protocols.

It would be near impossible to objectively judge whether or not a response is appropriate. The idea then is to look from an objective standpoint at what happened and try to learn from it.

How would ISU Police deal with a similar threat?

The university’s response to an active shooter is a multi-level approach, and an earlier Iowa State Daily story from October 2017 goes into further detail on the procedure.

In brief, patrol officers from ISU PD are the first to report on scene and are trained to stop the threat. After the initial response, further assistance in the form of officers and teams from around Story County arrives so other issues can be addressed, such as medical assistance, ensuring investigations and planning for a return to daily activity.

How does ISU Police's training prepare them for joint-agency scenarios?

Jacobs stated that past trainings have been specifically focused on interagency, active shooter responses. “In the fall of 2017,” she explained, “ISU Police hosted a multi-agency training on active killer events.”

The purpose of these ventures is to spread familiarity with how the system works and to provide a standard way of implementing it.

“Having local agencies such as the Ames Police and Story County Sheriff’s Office responding and having knowledge of the layout of our campus,” she said, “helps tremendously when responding to such an incident.”

Having quarterly training also makes a big impact. This past quarter, Jacobs stated, “officers were exposed to a variety of scenarios, including how to navigate the Incident Command System during such events.”

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a broadly used setup to standardize procedures when combining different agencies to ensure proper coordination.

Jacobs also said regarding ISU Police’s quarterly training that “such training keeps skill sets sharp as the officers are engaged in training four times a year as opposed to once a year.”

Moving forward

Always having a plan and always being able to handle a situation are crucial to learning from and preventing such events from happening again, so even though Florida seems worlds away, it still carries its weight across the country.
President Wintersteen addresses midyear budget cuts

Friday, March 23, 2018  Iowa State Daily

BY TRISTAN.WADE @iowastatedaily.com
Iowa State President Wendy Wintersteen sent out an email to the Iowa State community Thursday discussing midyear budget cuts that were approved by Iowa Legislature.

The bill that the Iowa Legislature approved will result in a total of $10.9 million in cuts from the Board of Regents for the current FY2018. The bill outlines that only Iowa State and the University of Iowa will be affected by the cuts.

Wintersteen addressed what the universities current action is to these cuts in her email.

“I am working with the Senior Vice Presidents to develop a plan to implement the midyear budget reduction while mitigating the impact on our teaching, research, and extension excellence, and critical student services,” Wintersteen said. “We also will engage university leaders across campus to provide input on this plan.”

Wintersteen also referenced the fact that the FY2019 budget appropriations for the Board of Regents are still unknown, and that the Board has said that it is thinking about a tuition rate increase. That is expected to be discussed at the April 11-12 Board of Regents meeting.

In the email, Wintersteen went on to thank those who have voiced strong opposition to the midyear cuts. She also pointed out the large population of Iowans that make up Iowa State’s enrollment.

“Our supporters know these students are the future of this state and are well worth the state’s investment in their growth, education, and development,” Wintersteen said.

Over the past four years, Iowa State has reduced or avoided costs totalling $22 million, Wintersteen said.

“The state’s move to take back promised funds for the second year in a row makes this an especially difficult situation, but Iowa State University is strong and resilient. We will face these challenges together to seek the best possible outcome for our students, faculty, and staff,” Wintersteen said.

Athletics department to give $1 million for degree completion grants

BY ALEX.CONNOR @iowastatedaily.com
Iowa State Athletic Director Jamie Pollard announced to Student Government Wednesday evening that the athletics department will be donating $1 million to the Financial Aid Office to go toward degree completion grants.

The contribution to the grants, which go toward students having financial difficulty completing their degrees, was first announced at Faculty Senate on Tuesday.

Pollard said that he was first approached by Student Government President Cody West last spring with West looking for opportunities for athletics to better help students.

While ideas such as discounted concessions were floated around, Pollard said he wanted to think just a bit bigger. After talking with Financial Aid Director Roberta Johnson, Pollard said her office could benefit from having more funding to help students stay in school.

“There’s a lot of hardship,” Pollard said. “There’s hardship where a student… is in a tough spot and can’t pay for school.”

Providing a brief summary of the athletics department budget, Pollard said that the announcement will be officially announced Thursday, but he wanted to let Student Government know beforehand.

Following his announcement, Student Government applauded the donation and some senators thanked Pollard for his department’s donation.

Pollard joked that he hoped the majority of the clapping was for West, as he had originally approached Pollard with an idea to benefit students.

“I’ll buy him a soda or a hot dog when he comes back for football next year,” Pollard said.

West also shared the news in his executive update Wednesday evening.

“One million dollars for the students of Iowa State University,” West said in his email report. “It is days like today that make our time in Student Government worth it.”
**POLICE BLOTTER**

3.21.18

Thomas Evan Reeves, age 23, of 4700 Mortensen Rd Unit 313 - Ames, IA, was arrested and charged with public intoxication at Welch Ave and Chambliss St (reported at 2:28 a.m.).

An officer initiated a drug related investigation at (reported at 10:00 a.m.).

An officer investigated a personal injury collision at 13th St and Stange Rd (reported at 5:42 p.m.).

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Young people can cause change with effort

In the wake of the tragic shooting in Parkland, Florida, conversation is happening. More importantly, calls for change are happening.

We wouldn't have asked the high school students, survivors of the shooting, to do anything after the horrible experience they'd been through. But they decided to do something anyway. And by doing so, they are inspiring a movement.

Once again “It's a violent video game that are the cause?” seems to be an argument that is often reached for, even though scientific studies have proven that false. “It's not a gun issue, it's a mental health issue” is an argument we hear like clockwork after each mass shooting, and yet on Feb. 27, 2017, Trump signed a measure removing a regulation that would make it harder for the mentally ill to get guns.

So if the President isn't worried about people with a mental illness buying guns, why should we be?

But there's something new this time, an argument I haven't seen touted for the other school shootings. Instead of taking less guns out of the equation, gun fanatics have decided it would be better to add more guns to the equation.

Trump, and many Republican gun owners, think it would be wise if we armed teachers. After all, if teachers had guns then mass shooters would be too afraid to enter! Well, as the headline dictates, I disagree with this idea. Let's not tackle the budgetary limitations just yet. Let's put ourselves in a scenario where this country cared about education and education was funded so well that arming teachers with military grade rifles wasn't out of the question.

Does no one remember that Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School already had an armed guard. Do you know what he did when Nikolas Cruz entered the school and opened fire? He did nothing. He was trained for this scenario, and he did nothing. Are you expecting an elderly tenured high school chemistry teacher to be beaver in that situation? Now let's get rid of the dream scenario of an infinite budget. As I said in my previous article, Trump proposed a $9.2 billion cut to education for the 2018 fiscal year. In some states teachers are so poorly paid they had to go on strike to get a decent wage.

These are teachers who are supposed to be fostering your child's future in a meaningful way and preparing them for the world at large. Not only are they educating them on academic principles, but also providing a listening ear when a child is going through life's hurdles. They're so much more than just teachers, they're mentors. They're supposed to be there for your child, and we're already underpaying them.

Now, on top of underpaying them for the incredibly important task they're already fulfilling, you want to put a gun in their hand. You refused to provide a budget to their school districts where they could adequately provide for their students without reaching into their own pockets or begging students' parents to provide resources, but you found it important enough to fund room in the budget to train them to be killers.

We can do better than that. Millennium and Gen X voter turnout increased in 2016...and among millennials, black turnout decreased.

But you need to take a breath and ground yourself. Arming and training teachers isn't a possibility. It never was, and it never can be. There needs to be change, but it won't be found in this course of action.

The change is more money into mental health research and preventative measures, more regulation on how accessible military grade assault rifles are to civilians and much, much more money into education.

COLUMN

Young people can change the world, not lazy.

In a different form, but it is still progress nonetheless.

Millennials are consistently stereotyped as lazy. But that’s missing the point. This generation has different values and a different way of life, but it is certainly not lazy.

The way millennials are civically engaged is vastly different.

Millennial and Generation X voter turnout increased in 2016 from the 2012 elections, according to Pew Research. But still, only half of millennials voted in 2016 when it was a presidential election. We can do better than that.

Millennial and Gen X voter turnout increased in 2016...and among millennials, black turnout decreased.

Being civically engaged requires exposing ourselves to new ideas and actively participating in our communities. We can do better than putting our opinions on social media, but not actually talking to lawmakers or participating in community conversations.

And we can do better than voting in presidential elections, but not caring about local elections that make more of a difference in our daily lives.

Young people can change the world, but not without effort and not without civic engagement. Let the Parkland teens be an inspiration to us to strive for change and progress at all levels of government.

OPINION

We shouldn’t arm teachers

COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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Sophomore Austin Fleener practices one of the hardest positions as the clay is coming toward you during practice.

The topic of guns and the control of those guns has been a big point of discussion in society today. Not only for the past few months, but the last couple of years.

With the increase in gun violence in the United States in the past few years, there have been calls for stricter gun laws with the intent to have tragedies occur less often. While guns can be used with bad intentions in mind, they can also be used for good. They can be used as a lesson on how to use them safely, but also competitively for sport.

This is what president Benjamin Dick and the Iowa State trap and skeet club say is the focus of the group.

The trap and skeet club provides a safe and competitive environment for people to learn to shoot, or continue to participate in the sport.

“Safety is our No. 1 priority,” Dick said. “If we have a new group of people who have never shot before, we’ll have a big safety meeting with everyone.”

The safety meeting is mandatory and supervised by the club’s advisors. The meeting consists of a demo on how the gun shoots, and how to properly handle the gun.

Dick is a sophomore studying agricultural business and as the president of the club, it is his job to ensure a safe environment for all the members of the club.

The safety precautions don’t stop there. To even be able to join the club, the club requires you to have either completed the Hunter’s Education Safety Course, or have participated in the DNR Firearms Safety Presentation.

After the group safety meeting, newcomers will then begin practicing their shot. But they do not do this alone.

“An experienced member of the club who is use to shooting will shadow a new member and watch how they’re shooting until they’re comfortable,” Dick said, explaining the process.

One of these experienced members of the club is vice president Dakota Boyer, junior in business management. Boyer participated in his high school’s trap and skeet team prior to coming to Iowa State.

“I got my hunter safety license when I was 12,” Boyer said. “I got it young so I was able to go hunting.”

So it’s needless to say that the club has a group of leaders who are very experienced with guns and have been around them for a long time.

Being part of a club that’s centered around guns can be difficult, especially when living on a college campus. With Iowa State’s rules about not having firearms on campus, members have to find places to keep their guns.

“Students that have their own guns, it is up to them to keep them off campus,” Dick said. “Usually, it’s a friends apartment or a house someone lives in right here in Ames.”

The gun that the team uses in competition is a 12-gauge shotgun. The team never uses their guns outside of a competition.

Most of the team has their guns custom fit for trap and skeet only, so they don’t have much use in any other environment. Tanner Owens, who is a sophomore in forestry, also started hunting at a young age and was part of his high school’s trap team for all four years.

Owens feels there is a different perception for people when it comes to hunting than there is for competitive shooting.

“I think people like the perspective of sports shooting better than using guns to kill animals because it’s a more competitive sport and they see it in the Olympics,” Owens said.

As the debate about guns continues every single day, the trap and skeet club becomes an even brighter light on a rather dark subject, becoming a place where kids can learn to shoot and use guns in a safe way.

In times like these, Dick and the rest of the club believe that this is when the club should be talked about and utilized more often. Now is when the club becomes even more important.

“I think competition is good for guns. It is a reason why we shouldn’t get rid of guns,” Dick said. “It’s teaching a safe way of how to use the guns and there is a club for young kids if they want to shoot guns.

“There is a safe way to do it.”
The Ames community will be joining together on the field of Jack Trice Stadium on March 24 to sleep under the stars for one night during the annual Reggie’s Sleepout.

Reggie’s Sleepout is hosted by Youth and Shelter Services (YSS), Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support (ACCESS) and Emergency Residence Project (ERP) with the intent to raise money and awareness about youth homelessness in central Iowa and across the country.

The event is designed to help those participating understand what it is like to sleep outside, even if just for a single night. The sleepout is free to attend, but donations and fundraising are encouraged. Throughout the event, there will be entertainment, including comedians and bands, food, and educational opportunities for the participants.

Reggie’s Sleepout was started 12 years ago in honor of a young man named Reggie Kelsey who, in 2001, aged out of foster care when he turned 18. Three and a half months later, Reggie was found dead in the Des Moines River.

As a result, YSS developed Reggie’s Sleepout to bring a wider awareness to the issue in Des Moines and other cities. Advocacy efforts initially started with an event called “Celebration of Hope.” This event involved auctioning off pottery that was painted by celebrities, such as John Travolta, Whoopi Goldberg and Bill Cosby. The first year brought in over $6,000.

The following year, the event was not as successful, which sent the YSS team back to the drawing board, resulting in the creation of Reggie’s Sleepout. Those on the board found the sleepout was a good way to give the community a small sense of what these youths and others who face homelessness go through.

“I went to a lot of fundraisers and very few, if any, were in as close alignment with the cause as Reggie’s Sleepout,” said Andrew Allen, CEO of YSS.

The sleepout this year is only the second in Ames and will mark the 13th year that it has been held in Des Moines. Between the two, Reggie’s Sleepout has raised nearly $2 million for homeless youth since it began.

This year, McFarland Clinic, Wells Fargo, Todd and Sargent, Iowa State and three of the “First Ladies of Iowa State Athletics” — Katie Prohm, Erica Campbell and Deb Fennelly — are all actively donating, participating and fundraising to help the cause. All proceeds raised are shared equally between YSS, ACCESS and ERP.

YSS is an Iowa organization which has positively impacted youth and families for more than 40 years. The organization provides a variety of programs through their locations throughout central and north Iowa to allow the youth and families to build a brighter future. YSS also helps 67,000 children every year.

ACCESS focuses on aiding survivors of domestic and sexual abuse as well as those seeking social justice. The organization provides services such as support groups, advocacy and temporary, emergency housing, to those in need free of charge while remaining confidential. ACCESS has several locations in central Iowa as well as several hotlines to assist those around Iowa.

ERP is an organization in Ames which provides food and shelter to the homeless as well as aid in the prevention of individuals becoming or remaining homeless. ERP has been in Ames for more than 33 years and has aided more than 2,000 individuals and families during the 2016-17 fiscal year.

“Every person deserves a home, but especially every kid should have a home and this is a way that we both raise awareness and money, and it’s in a format that’s actually pretty fun,” said Allen.

For more information, visit the Reggie’s Sleepout website.
Iowa State Daily  Friday, March 23, 2018

NEWS

One bill moving through the Senate would require schools to go through active shooter training. This bill, SF 2253, has mustered up support on both sides one day after Nikolas Cruz pulled a fire alarm and shot students at his former school as they filed out of classrooms. The bill requires schools to set up protocols for school shooters, natural disasters and other emergencies before June 30, 2019. These plans can be given recommendations by the state and must be in compliance with local law enforcement.

“It basically dictates to school districts that they have to have an appropriate emergency plan. I’m presuming that something like 80 percent of the districts already have that, but just in case they need to be reminded we have moved a bill forward along those lines,” Quirmbach said.

“I can’t imagine that any school administrator who is at all competent hasn’t already worked through this issue.” With 80 percent of schools in the state currently having protocols for active shooters, legislators realize the need for active shooter trainings but are saddened by the necessity in this day and age.

Sen. Jeff Danielson, D-Waterloo, shared his support for the bill on social media: “Today, after another school shooting tragedy in Florida, I voted to require all Iowa K-12 schools to have a plan and practice for active shooter incidents.” Danielson also stated his concerns for the state moving forward: “I would rather be voting on better mental healthcare, real background checks and greater accountability for assault weapon ownership.” This stance is one shared by many Democrats in the Iowa Legislature, but Senate and House Republicans don’t completely agree. Speaker of the House Linda Upmeyer, R-Clear Lake, gave her support for the bill and said she was willing to discuss the mental health issues in the state.

Since the shooting Wednesday, no legislation has been pursued that would tighten gun laws in the state, and with the first legislative deadline passed, no new bills are coming for the 2018 session.

Following the shooting, Sen. Mark Chelgren, R-Ottumwa, proposed legislation, SF 2086, that would recognize the Second Amendment in schools.

“The bill provides that a person with a valid nonprofessional permits to carry weapons may go armed with, carry, or transport a firearm on school grounds,” the bill stated.

“The bill died before making it to the senate floor. A seriously dumb idea,” Quirmbach said, “The bill died an appropriate death, metaphorically speaking.” Chelgren did not respond to requests for comments. A constitutional carry was scheduled to be discussed on Feb. 14 but, after the Florida shooting, was taken off the agenda. Quirmbach said he doesn’t believe this bill will move through this legislative session.

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-Sen. Herman Quirmbach, D-Ames

GUNS PG1

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