

FREDERICK: Police should be armed
Opinion

Issue date: 9/10/07 Section:

The Government of the Student Body deserves applause for its leadership in recommending that ISU Police carry firearms. Although this decision was obviously not easy, nor unanimous, it is the correct and common sense answer to this issue....

The situations faced by our campus police are similar to those faced by any other police force in the nation, be it the Ames police or the Iowa State Patrol. Both of these organizations carry firearms.

The campus police also have identical or equivalent training to that of any Ames police officer or Iowa State Patrolman.

In some of the rural areas of this state, there are entire counties that haven't seen a murder or an armed crime in decades, yet the police are still armed. How, then, can there be any strong argument for why ISU Police shouldn't be armed, just like their counterparts?

If there is support for unarmed police here, is there then also support for disarming the rural sheriff's departments? The State Patrol? The city of Ames is a safe place. Shall we disarm the Ames Police as well? The statistics, in this case, are easily overridden by simple common sense....

And what do we lose by arming our officers? What harm is done to anyone if, as we all hope, the officer's firearm never leaves its holster? What, conversely, could be the potential benefits of arming our campus police, in the event that a Virginia Tech-style incident was to occur here?

...Having unarmed police involved in any shooting incident, or, indeed, any armed altercation whatever, simply turns the officers into yet another target. People look to the police for protection and security in times of distress. Leaving them unarmed puts those officers in precisely the same condition as those they are sworn to protect under these circumstances, a thought which is neither a comfort, nor of much practical use, to anyone involved.

What is being misunderstood here, however, is that this issue is not about gun control, the Second Amendment or anything political. The issue is our safety as a community and the ability of our police to protect us quickly and effectively.

ISSUE: Should we arm the ISU police? (policy issue)

Conclusion: We should arm the ISU police.

Reasons: 1. There's no difference between the ISU police and other armed police.

2. The benefits of the plan outweigh the harms.

My feedback:

1. You do a good job developing strong SUPPORT for the analogy between ISU and other police. You give one strong reason for thinking that the police services are similar (they face the same situations), and then ask MORE? and give another (they have the same training), and then another (they don't deal with a lot of murders, but are still armed).

2. To help your audience understand your good argument, you need to be much, much more CLEAR. Notice that you don't even state the conclusion of the analogy argument—you never say "We should arm the ISU police *because they're the same as any other police.*" This makes your argument very hard to understand. Be sure to be explicit!

3. You also may want to consider continuing to ask HDYKT? questions. Your audience may wonder what kind of training do ISU police get? Are the situations they face the same (can you give an example or two)? It will give your argument even more SUPPORT if you continue to ask and answer such reasonable questions.