



EPIC-MRA PRESS RELEASE ON STATEWIDE POLL ABOUT GUNS IN SCHOOLS

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Key findings:

69% opposes open carry in schools

57% opposes concealed carry in schools

53% favors argument to prohibit guns in schools

61% agrees that only law enforcement should have guns in schools

In the EPIC-MRA statewide survey of 600 ($\pm 4.0\%$) active and likely general election voters conducted October 25 through 31, which was commissioned by the Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, a 69 to 27 percent majority said that citizens with a Concealed Pistol License SHOULD NOT be able to “open carry” their pistol into a Michigan school, college, university, daycare center or early childhood building. A 57 to 39 percent majority expressed the same opinion that citizens with a Concealed Pistol License SHOULD NOT be able to concealed carry a pistol into a school, college, university, daycare center or early childhood building.

Taken together these and other survey results show that voters solidly oppose the underlying premise of a legislative proposal that presupposes public acceptance of firearms in schools by allowing people to conceal carry in exchange for banning people from openly carrying guns into schools. A 61 to 33 percent majority said they agree (45 percent strongly) with the statement that “the only guns that should be allowed in schools, colleges, universities, daycare centers and early childhood centers are the guns that are carried by law enforcement and school security officials, and the Legislature should only pass laws that prohibit people from bringing any weapons into schools, regardless of how they are carried.”

Survey respondents were told:

“Next, I want to ask you about Michigan gun laws:

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer

- Market
- Research
- Analysis

First of all, for the purposes of these questions, the term, “open carry” refers to a pistol that observers can clearly see in a holster on the hip, or attached in some other manner on the outside of the person’s clothing. The term “concealed carry” means that the owner of a pistol is carrying it under his or her clothing or otherwise so the pistol is not visible to observers. It is illegal for a person to carry a concealed pistol unless that individual possesses a Concealed Pistol License.”

All respondents were then asked:

“In your opinion, should citizens who have a Concealed Pistol License which allows them to either conceal carry or open carry a pistol, be legally allowed to openly carry their pistol into a Michigan school, college, university, daycare or early childhood building or onto such property, or, should they NOT be allowed to do that?”

- 27% | Yes, they SHOULD be allowed to open carry into schools and onto school property**
- 69% | No, they SHOULD NOT be allowed to open carry into schools and onto school property**
- 4% | Undecided/Refused**

An 86 percent majority of Democrats, 63 percent of Independent voters and 55 percent of Republican voters oppose openly carrying guns into schools and the other educational facilities listed. It is also worth noting that not only 81 percent of voters without guns in the home oppose open carry, but so do owners of rifles (60-35 percent), owners of handguns (58-36%), owners of shotguns (57-38 percent), as well as NRA members (52-39 percent). Tea Party supporters are split on the question (48-47 percent). Voters with children oppose open carry by 70 percent. Just about every demographic group agrees that the open carry of guns in schools SHOULD NOT be allowed.

All respondents were also asked

“In your opinion, should citizens who have a Concealed Pistol License, be legally allowed to concealed carry their pistol into a school, college, university, daycare or early childhood building or onto such property, or, should they NOT be allowed to do that?”

- 39% | Yes, they SHOULD be allowed to conceal carry into schools and onto school property**
- 57% | No, they SHOULD NOT be allowed to conceal carry into schools and onto school property**
- 4% | Undecided/Refused**

A 77 percent majority of Democrats and 55 percent of Independent voters opposed concealed carry in schools and other education facilities listed, while 57 percent of Republicans favor concealed carry. However, it is important to note that Republican women are split on concealed carry with 46 percent in favor and 47 percent opposed. Voters with no guns in the home oppose concealed carry, with rifle owners split on the question (47 to 47 percent), and shotgun owners and handgun owners only supporting concealed carry by a narrow 51 percent majority. Not surprisingly, NRA members and Tea Party supporters favor concealed carry by solid majorities. Voters with children oppose concealed carry by 60 percent.

Survey respondents were then read the two following statements about the right to bear arms...

Now I am going to read two statements to you. The first one is...

[ROTATE STATEMENTS]

A citizen's right to bear arms under the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution is just as meaningful as the right to freedom of speech or the right to peaceably assemble. Because the right to bear arms carries as much importance as any of the other freedoms granted under the Bill of Rights, any regulation on how that right is exercised by government – even in our kindergarten through 12th grade schools – must involve the least possible infringement of that right.

The second one is...

It is the obligation of parents, teachers and school administrators to provide the best learning environment for our children. They are in the classroom with students and they are in the best position to determine what is in the best interest of the safety and welfare of our children. None of our rights as citizens is absolute in all cases, including the right to bear arms. Allowing schools to designate themselves as weapons-free zones is a reasonable regulation of a constitutional guarantee and does not significantly diminish anyone's right to bear arms.

Respondents were then asked...

Thinking about this issue, which statement comes closer to your view...?

[ROTATE STATEMENTS]

The statement saying schools may prohibit citizens from possessing weapons on school grounds;

Or,

The statement saying the constitution protects a citizen's right to bear arms – even on school grounds.

53%	Statement saying schools may prohibit citizens from possessing weapons on schools grounds
40%	Statement saying the Constitution protects a citizen's right to bear arms, even on school grounds
2%	Neither (VOLUNTEERED)
5%	Undecided/Refused

A 68 percent majority of Democrats favor the statement saying schools may prohibit guns in schools, Independent voters are split on the question (46 to 45 percent), and Republicans only narrowly favors the statement by 51 percent saying that the Constitution protects a citizen's right to bear arms -- even on school grounds, with Republican women less supportive by 49 percent.

Voters who do not own guns favor the statement saying guns can be prohibited by 60 percent, while rifle owners also favor having guns prohibited. Shotgun owners are split on the question at 46 percent, and handgun owners favor the statement supporting the right to bear arms, but only by a 48 percent plurality. NRA members favor the right to bear arms statement, but only by a 46-43 percent plurality, while voters who support the Tea Party favor the right to bear arms statement by 55 percent. Voters with children favor the statement saying guns can be prohibited by a 49 to 43 percent plurality.

Finally, all respondents were asked:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The only guns that should be allowed in Michigan schools, colleges, universities, daycare or early childhood centers are the guns that are carried by law enforcement or school security officials, and the Legislature should only pass laws that prohibit people from bringing any weapons into schools, regardless of how they are carried. Do you agree or disagree? [IF AGREE/DISAGREE, ASK: “Would that be strongly or somewhat?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE]

45%	Strongly agree
16%	Somewhat agree
61%	<i>TOTAL AGREE</i>
33%	<i>TOTAL DISAGREE</i>
10%	Somewhat disagree
23%	Strongly disagree
6%	Undecided/Refused

The response to this question most clearly articulates voter opinion about the legislative idea of banning open carry in exchange for allowing concealed carry in schools as state law. For nearly two-thirds of voters, the response is: “We do not want either.”

Democrats agree with the statement by 80 percent, Independent voters agree by 62 percent, and Republican voters disagree by only a 53 to 40 percent majority, but more importantly, Republican women are split on the question with 46 percent disagreeing and 43 percent agreeing. Voters without guns agree with the statement by 78 percent, while rifle owners agree by 49 to 44 percent, shotgun owners are split at 47 percent each, and handgun owners are split as well with 47 to 45 percent disagreeing. NRA members disagree by 55 percent, and Tea Party supporters disagree by 57 percent. Voters with children agree by 64 percent.

Based on these poll results, the legislative discussion involving open-vs.-concealed-carry-in-schools is akin to a doctor asking a patient if they would prefer applying leeches or bloodletting to treat their ailment, when in reality the patient doesn't favor either option. That is, with over three of five voters expressing a strong preference for no firearms in schools at all, it would seem that the current legislative approach of permitting concealed carry as a condition of banning open carry is missing the mark.