



January 27, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is David Williams and I have lived in Burlington for the past 12 years. For the last 10 years I have worked security at What Ales You (WAY), a bar on the corner of St. Paul and Main Street. I started working at WAY while I was a student at UVM and have continued to work there one to two nights a week. In addition to working downtown, I also teach mathematics at Burlington High School and I'm currently in my eighth year. For over the past decade I have seen first hand how the population of Burlington has changed at multiple levels. With this experience I believe I can give you first hand details of how my job as security has taken on new challenges.

I'm writing this letter because I was asked to share my experiences while working in downtown Burlington and to give you an account as to how the nightlife scene in Burlington has changed. Over the last 10 years the majority of the bar patrons has remained relatively unchanged, there are college students, local residents, and tourists. What has changed is technology and relatively easy access people have to guns and their willingness to carry them at all times. In the past disputes at bars could be settled and arguments would be extinguished or ushered outside of the establishment where authorities could be called. Up until the last couple years I have not had many experiences with patrons brandishing a gun. I can recall a few recent instances, but rather than focus on the specific details I would like to state my argument in calling for a ban of firearms in establishments that sell alcohol.

While under the influences of alcohol a person does not exhibit the same judgment and control as they would when sober. This is a fact of life and needs to be accepted. Furthermore, if a person is going to be in a crowded bar there is no need to have a weapon on them. When a disagreement surfaces it is usually between two customers and security has to intervene. Most of these arguments are settled peacefully, however, as in a recent case when that argument spills out on the street their can be tragedy. By adjusting the law and making it clear to patrons that no weapons will be permitted, customers and staff can feel safer.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter, and if there are any other questions or concerns you make reach me at the information provided below. Burlington is a beautiful place that I now call home and will continue to do so for the remainder of my life. It should not be a place that people have to wonder if they are standing next to someone with a weapon tucked in their waist band. I urge you to do the right thing and make the laws around fire arms in the downtown area stricter.

Sincerely,

David Williams
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Mathematics Teacher at Burlington High School
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