

## Required gun possession the answer to attacks

**WILLIAM  
BARNETT II**

and **WALTER  
BLOCK**

On The Record



There has been a spate of robberies and sexual assaults aimed at university coeds in uptown New Orleans. A single black man approaches girls walking in the street in pairs at night and then proceeds to rob, confine and sexually assault them.

The reaction on the part of the police authorities is the usual blather about being "street smart," not carrying a weapon, not resisting and not venturing out at night. If going unarmed was such great advice, why don't they follow it themselves? Further, why should the victims have to pay twice, once in the form of being robbed and raped, and then, again, in the form of having their liberties to walk on public streets curtailed.

The response from school authorities is, if anything, worse: holding candlelight vigils, praying, having "Take Back the Night" marches and organizing teach-ins

attempting to indoctrinate the students with the usual leftist feminist and liberal shibboleths, ad nauseam. If these things give university students any comfort, it is a false sense of security, which could prove to be their undoing. Quite possibly the assailant joins the very parade set up against him, biting his lips to keep from laughing outright, which might well be the only harm that befalls him from these events. Such tactics might make some people feel good, but they do nothing to address the problem.

In contrast, we offer a five-point program of arming the victims, virtually guaranteed to solve the problem.

1. Take down those signs on campuses announcing they are "gun free" zones. That is the worst possible message to send to potential perpetrators of violence against our community. We might as well post a sign saying, "C'mon in, attackers, we've disarmed ourselves and will be easy prey." This no-gun policy, thank God, does not apply to campus police, who can't be everywhere, as is the case

with their city counterparts.

2. Require that all female students own a pistol or other means of self defense; (e.g., pepper spray, mace, stun gun, or electric shock device) and carry it with them at all times. The women of Kennesaw, Ga., an affluent northern suburb of Atlanta, were once plagued by rapists. This town not only allowed, but required its citizens to be armed. You'll never guess what happened to the rape rate after this progressive policy was enacted. The law, however, was compulsory, and violated the rights of pacifists and other local citizens who might have objected. But this would not apply to Loyola, a private institution.

This change in policy would have to be grandfathered in so as to avoid contractual violations, but in the future, females who do not wish to protect themselves in this way would be perfectly free to attend other universities.

They would have no right to be on campus, unless they obey all rules and regulations (in contrast, the citizenry of Kennesaw did have a right to remain there, in violation of the law). In the meantime, this enlightened policy could be introduced on a voluntary basis and encouraged by the administration.

3. Packing a weapon is necessary,

but not sufficient. All women at Loyola ought to be required to take a course in gun safety. The last thing we want are accidental shootings. Leftists bruit about statistics on accidents in which children are killed with revolvers. But these data are wildly exaggerated by including the shooting deaths of young, teenaged gang-bangers, whose deaths are certainly purposeful.

4. Volleyball, basketball, cross-country and baseball teams are all well and good, but a sports organization aimed at improving marksmanship would be far more helpful in present circumstances. (When is the last time a Loyola student won an Olympic medal in target shooting? It is time for a change.) All students don't have to be sharpshooters. Reasonable accuracy even at 10 to 15 feet will be more than enough to scare off potential rapists. Even the presence of an automatic in a co-ed's handbag or pocket would fully accomplish this task.

5. When the new student center at Loyola is erected, it should include an indoor shooting range, just as the old field house did. The new rifle and pistol team would practice there, as would every woman student who so wished. The muffled sounds of target practice would alone give pause to all

ne'er do wells in the neighborhood. It will undoubtedly be objected against this "modest proposal" that arming young girls will not protect them — that their weapons will be seized by their attackers. Logic, common sense and vast hordes of empirical evidence give the lie to all such negativism. Put yourself in the position of a New Orleans mugger and rapist: Would you really want to engage in your usual depredations in the uptown area, knowing that you could do so on no more than even terms? The uptown predator already has come armed; let his victims face him on even terms. World-class economist John Lott has done a series of econometric studies linking gun ownership with increased personal safety.

After this forward-looking policy proves a success in the collegiate uptown area, it could be implemented by private organizations throughout the entire city. Then and only then would the scourge of raping and robbing have a good chance of being vastly decreased throughout our whole community.

*Walter Block is an endowed chair in economics. William Barnett II is an associate professor of economics.*