



## **Virginia Citizens Defense League, Inc.**

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July 18, 2007

Statement to the Virginia Tech Panel

“When seconds count, the police are only minutes away.”

As an ex-deputy sheriff who served proudly in Texas, those words are hauntingly true.

In a violent confrontation the only people guaranteed to be there are the criminal and his victim. In fact, if the police arrive in time to save the victim from death or harm, that victim has won the most important lottery of his or her life. Thirty-two innocent, decent people were taught that final lesson the hard way.

Citizens have been carrying concealed handguns with permits in Virginia for well over a decade now. Currently there are over 140,000 such permit holders in Virginia.

This much can be said them: they can be trusted.

We’ve heard the same tired rhetoric from police officials and others before - that there will be blood in the streets and drunken shootouts if people are allowed to carry handguns. That is exactly what the General Assembly was told when they were considering legislation to make Virginia a ‘shall-issue’ state for concealed handgun permits back in 1995.

The naysayers have long since been proven to be completely wrong. In fact permit holders can be shown to be the most law-abiding of any group of citizens.

The kind of person who goes through all the hoops to get a permit isn’t the kind to walk around drunk or to pull a gun to settle arguments. Instead permit holders quietly carry their concealed handguns day-in and day-out without incident.

There is no *logical* reason for higher-educational institutions to prohibit the carry of firearms for self-defense, either by staff or adult students who have concealed carry permits. The school building that they are in is just that – a building. It is absolutely no different than any other building. A criminal can come and go as he pleases – there is no magical barrier that keeps out evil.

It is not the government's job to interfere with an adult's right to self-defense – life is too precious, and too short, for that.

The next time someone decides to take innocent lives on one of our campuses; let's make sure that the victims will have a fighting chance to survive. That, in and of itself, will serve as a strong deterrent to those who would harm us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Van Cleave". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Philip Van Cleave

President

Virginia Citizens Defense League