

Dear Ms. Downey,

I am writing in reply to your editorial of Thursday, August 23, 2007, entitled, "Guns, parks don't mix." Although you also ran a piece entitled "Equal Time," in which you purported to allow for an opposing viewpoint, your piece was given 36 column-inches to the opposing viewpoint's 12. Moreover, because your piece is as much a direct attack on GeorgiaCarry.Org as it is an opinion of the issues, I am requesting that you provide sufficient space for a rebuttal and not limit this response to 150 words.

Your claim that GeorgiaCarry.Org has a "dangerous agenda" is rooted in the mistaken assumption that it is better for law-abiding citizens to be unarmed and only for criminals to be armed. Implicit in your comments is the belief that criminals somehow abide by misdemeanor gun bans, despite their willingness to commit violent felonies. The aforementioned assumptions defy logic.

I am amazed that you chastise the city of Kennesaw for obeying state law when its violation was pointed out. You encourage Kennesaw to litigate the matter, just as Coweta County chose to do. You come to the incredible conclusion that the court of appeals "ought to rule in [Coweta County's] favor given Georgia law." Just as Coweta County did, you appear to be ignoring the state law that expressly prohibits counties (and cities) from regulating the carry or possession of firearms (with only three inapplicable exceptions).

You attempt to refute the notion "that more guns equal less safety" by noting that Georgia "has one of the highest rates of firearms violence." You fail to mention, however, that Georgia is the most restrictive state in the country regarding where firearms may be carried. An important reason Georgia has a high crime rate is because law abiding citizens are not permitted to carry guns in so many places. They are left defenseless.

It is interesting that you cite the state's "public gathering law" as a model of legislation. You may care to inform your readers that the public gathering law was passed at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in a series of Jim Crow laws designed to keep black citizens as second class. The primary purpose of the public gathering law was to provide a mechanism to disarm blacks. For more information on this topic, do a search on the Camilla Massacre.

Finally, as "evidence" that allowing guns to be carried in parks by law-abiding citizens would lead to more crimes, you cite an incident where criminals shot a 4-year-old in a park. The ban on guns in that park failed to prevent criminals from perpetrating this crime. An armed parent might have been able to.

Finally, I note that your dire predictions of blood in the parks if people are allowed to carry in them ignores the fact that only seven of 159 counties in Georgia ban carrying firearms in their parks. I do not read daily stories in your newspaper of children being

shot by citizens licensed to carry in those parks. In fact, I never have read an article in your newspaper of a licensed citizen shooting a child anywhere in the state.

John Monroe  
Attorney for GeorgiaCarry.Org, Inc.