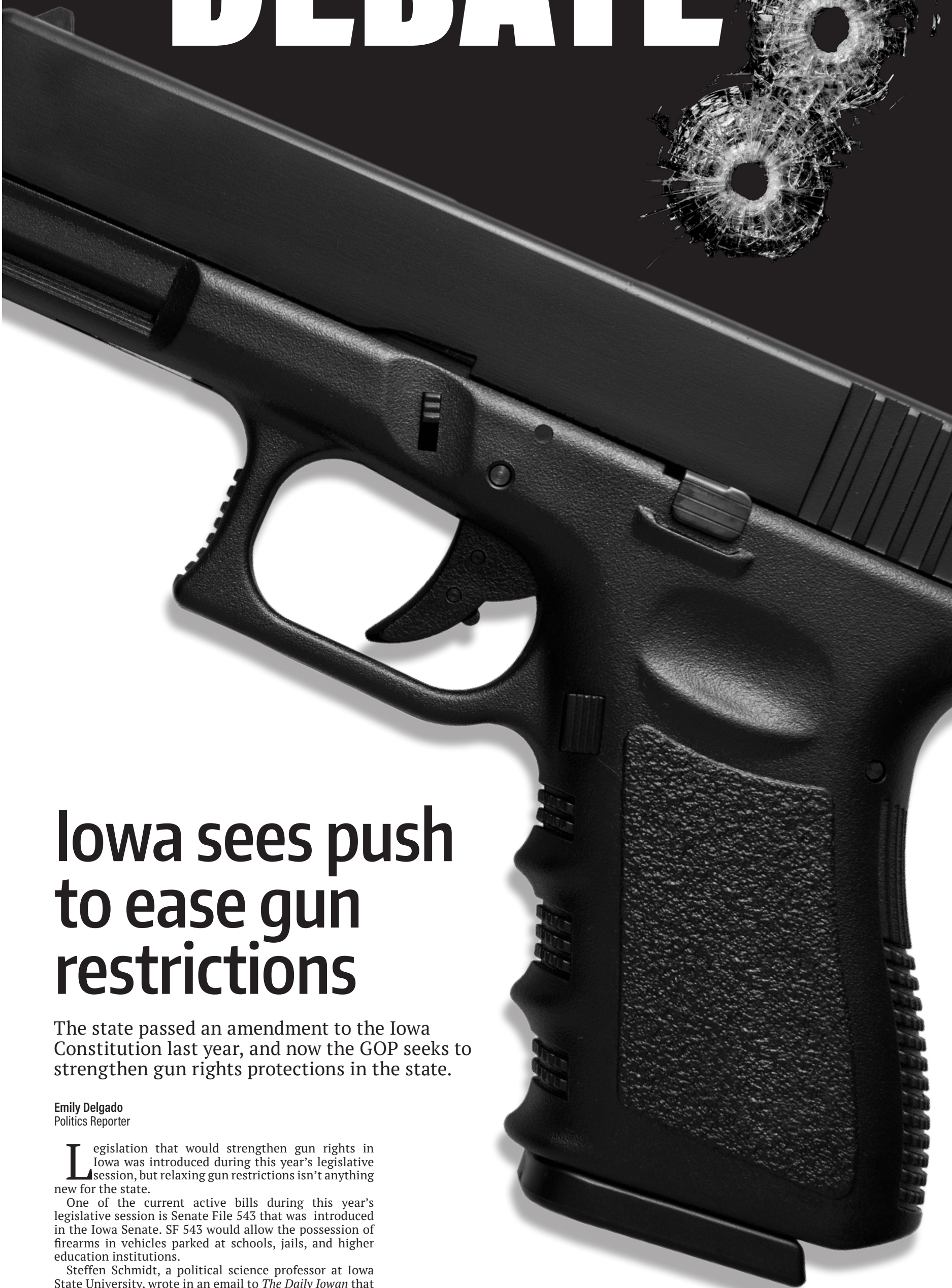


# LOADED DEBATE



## Iowa sees push to ease gun restrictions

The state passed an amendment to the Iowa Constitution last year, and now the GOP seeks to strengthen gun rights protections in the state.

Emily Delgado  
Politics Reporter

Legislation that would strengthen gun rights in Iowa was introduced during this year's legislative session, but relaxing gun restrictions isn't anything new for the state.

One of the current active bills during this year's legislative session is Senate File 543 that was introduced in the Iowa Senate. SF 543 would allow the possession of firearms in vehicles parked at schools, jails, and higher education institutions.

Steffen Schmidt, a political science professor at Iowa State University, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that bills like SF 543 are an example of gun laws in the state that are becoming less restrictive.

House File 147, a bill that was killed during funnel week, would have created the Second Amendment Preservation Act that would reaffirm the state's rights to decide gun laws within its borders.

Elinor Levin, D-Iowa City, said the bill created a conflict

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### INSIDE

#### BY THE NUMBERS:

During the exploration of story pitches, *The Daily Iowan* found common data and information that would be useful and visually interesting to show the Iowa City and UI community.

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#### GUN VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ADVOCATES PERSIST AMID LOOSENING GUN REGULATIONS:

Gun safety advocates, such as Temple Hiatt, said gun legislation should be implemented to minimize harm from firearms.

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#### AIRPORT FIREARM INTERCEPTIONS ON THE RISE:

More guns were found at Iowa airports in 2022 than in previous years. The Des Moines International Airport caught 15 guns, while the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids caught six in 2022.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Why we chose a ‘loaded debate’ for our special edition

While many ideas were discussed, a “loaded debate” was chosen because it’s a hot-button and comprehensive topic.



Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

A police officer walks through a crime scene near the entrance of Brother’s Bar and Grill after reports of shots fired near the Ped Mall in Iowa City, on Jan. 14.



Hannah Pinski  
Executive Editor

One of the most important responsibilities I have as executive editor is choosing stories that go in our print paper. Because *The Daily Iowan* only prints twice a week, I always want to make sure that our coverage has an impact on our community.

So, dedicating a whole issue like this print edition is a big deal.

When I began my tenure as Executive Editor, I knew I wanted one of our 68 print issues to be a “spe-

cial edition” like editors have created in the past. The first one I was a part of was two years ago when the *DI* published a paper dedicated to “one year of COVID-19.”

After witnessing the issue’s impact, I realized the power that journalism has when we provide comprehensive coverage on a topic that’s important to our community.

A lot of potential special edition topics, such as student loan forgiveness, were thrown around during last semester.

So, why did we choose guns in Iowa? To state the obvious first, guns are a hot-button issue. In 2022, the U.S. Congress passed a milestone gun control bill that was supported by both Democrats and Re-

publicans. This was the first time in almost 30 years that firearms legislation received bipartisan support.

On a state level, gun laws in Iowa have drastically changed within the past five years. One of the most notable changes happened during the 2021 Legislative Session, when Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a new law removing the requirement to obtain or carry a permit when possessing a gun within city limits.

More recently, 65 percent of Iowans voted in support of the “Right to Keep and Bear Arms” amendment to Iowa’s constitution that would strengthen protections for gun rights.

Second, guns are a comprehensive and data-heavy

topic. From gun offenses to gun interceptions at Iowa airports, we knew this issue had the potential for a variety of stories and visually interesting graphics. That’s why we have a whole page dedicated to different numbers, statistics, and facts surrounding guns, gun violence, and gun regulations in Iowa and across the country.

Finally, another reason why we chose to focus on guns in this edition is because of the increased amount of gun violence and crime both locally and nationally. According to data from the Gun Violence Archive, 2022 was reported to be the second-highest year for mass shootings in the U.S.

While current University of Iowa students have been fortunate to avoid shooting events on campus, a number of shootings in downtown Iowa City have created concerns within the community. Universities like Michigan State have also experienced gun violence that killed four students last month, showing that the safety of students can quickly change.

Additionally, gun violence is costing Iowans, whether they’ve experienced it or not. On average, gun violence costs the state \$4.2 billion every year, and \$53 million of it is paid by taxpayers.

When we worked on this issue, we wanted to include as many different voices as possible. From politicians to health care workers to UI students, we

## The Daily Iowan

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were able to highlight a variety of voices and cover a wide range of topics in this paper.

We know our readership is going to have differing opinions on topics such as guns and methods to combat gun violence. The goal of this print edition isn’t just to provide statistics or facts about guns in the

state.

I also hope that this special edition will spark conversation on these different issues. Our writers, photographers, and editors have worked on this edition since January, and we hope this paper makes the impact we want it to make.

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## JoCO, IC sees steady number of gun offenses and crimes

The county attorney’s office increasingly prosecuted firearm possessions, but gun violence and crime rates are stable.



Emily Nyberg/The Daily Iowan

A person holds a handgun at the Hawkeye Wildlife Shooting Range in Amana, Iowa, on March 20.

Alejandro Rojas  
Jack Moore

Gun offenses and crimes have remained steady for the past four years in Johnson County despite an increase in the prosecutions of firearm possession.

The Johnson County Attorney’s Office prosecuted 80 cases involving guns between 2019 and 2020, according to data provided by County Attorney Rachel Zimmermann Smith. It remains unclear whether gun crimes and deaths are becoming more frequent across the county.

Data from the Johnson County Medical Examiner’s Office show that firearm fatalities declined in 2018 but have been steadily rising back to around 20 deaths per year. The Medical Examiner’s

office investigates sudden or unexpected deaths that are due to unnatural causes to determine the cause and manner of death of the deceased.

Johnson County Medical Examiner Executive Director Clayton Schuneman said the most common type of gun-inflicted injury was death by suicide. In 2022, 21 people died in Johnson County from firearms, and 13 were death by suicide.

“One of the primary responsibilities that we have is to investigate all these deaths and then correlate this data and put that in the hands of people who can make policy decisions,” Schuneman said.

Schuneman said most of the suicides and homicides the Medical Examiner’s Office investigates are from handguns rather

than higher caliber firearms.

“[It’s] pretty noticeable that the vast majority of those are occurring with handguns as opposed to rifles or shotguns, and that includes suicides and our homicides,” Schuneman said.

### Gun offenses and prosecutions in Johnson County, Iowa City

The Johnson County Attorney prosecuted 43 people for possession of a firearm as a felon between 2019 and 2020:

- The county attorney reported 21 firearm-related offenses in 2019.
- The county attorney reported 22 firearm-related offenses in 2020.

- The county attorney reported 35 firearm-related offenses in 2021.

The second most notable increase was prosecutions of persons ineligible to carry dangerous weapons. This number jumped from 13 in 2021 to 38 in 2022.

According to publicly available data on gun offenses in Iowa City from the Iowa City Police Department, there were a total of 109 shootings from 2019-2021. The year with the most shootings in this period was 2020, when 57 shootings occurred.

The data also shows that there were five homicides in this period: three in 2021, two in 2020, and none in 2019.

**UI police see decrease in calls,**

### higher firearm-related offenses

Hayley Bruce, assistant director for communication and external relations for the Office of Campus Safety, wrote in an email to the *DI* that the UI Police Department saw a decrease in calls during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The three reported incidents in 2022 consisted of a suspect attempting to disarm an officer, possession of a handgun during a traffic stop, and reports of shots fired.

The University of Iowa Office of Campus Safety provided the *DI* with data related to gun-offenses on the university campus, which showed that firearm-related offenses on the UI’s campus were higher than normal for the last two years. There were three reported inci-

dents in 2021, with no incidents in 2020, and only one in 2019.

In 2021, there was a possession of a firearm during a traffic stop, a report of a gun being pointed at someone with no gun recovery, and reports of shots fired on the T. Anne Clery Walkway.

Bruce also referred in her email a message from Assistant Vice President for Campus Safety Mark Bullock on Feb. 22, which outlined what the UI does to address campus violence as well as the resources it has to support students.

In the message, Bullock wrote that the UI Department of Public Safety reassesses best practices after events like the murders at Michigan State University earlier this year.

This includes training campus police to a level that exceeds standards, having threat assessment and intervention programs, supporting mental and emotional health of people, among other things.

He also wrote what students and faculty should and can do to help them be aware and prepared for any emergencies.

This included receiving Hawk Alerts, checking the emergency website during emergencies, attending trainings for violent incident survival and first aid, and reporting troubling behavior.

Bruce said, however, and the police department can’t attribute a specific reason for the decrease in calls during the pandemic.

“While we can’t speculate on one factor behind the decrease in gun-related incidents on campus in 2020, it’s reasonable to assume that there were less opportunities for this type of crime on campus because many people across campus and in the wider Iowa City community were practicing social distancing and working/learning from home,” Bruce wrote.

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Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

A gun flare is seen at the Hawkeye Wildlife Shooting Range in Amana, Iowa on March 20.



Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

Elinor Levin, Iowa House of Representative candidate for District 89, answers questions from the audience on Oct. 3, 2022, after an event in the Iowa Memorial Union Leadership Room.

**LEGISLATION**  
Continued from Front

of interest over who should carry firearms. “Legislation like this artificially creates a conflict between the idea that someone is a peaceful, law-abiding citizen is able to own a gun and the idea that there could still be restrictions to protect those of us who are around people who may not be safe to own weaponry or there may not be certain weaponry that is safe for all to own,” Levin said.

**Gun restrictions loosen in Iowa**

In recent years, legislation spearheaded by the GOP have eased gun restrictions in Iowa. “Now there are very few restrictions to owning and possessing firearms and even keeping a gun in your vehicle in a school parking lot, as long as it’s hidden from sight, or another sensitive location is now allowed,” Schmidt said. During the November 2022 midterm election, Iowans voted to add “strict scrutiny language” — or the “right to bear arms” — that protected the Second Amendment in the state

constitution. Strict scrutiny is the highest level of scrutiny that legislation needs to pass. The addition of the language received 65 percent of the votes, while 35 percent of Iowans voted against the language. “That vote did demonstrate very broad support for the right to keep and bear arms in Iowa,” Levin said about the November amendment to the Iowa Constitution. The phrase, “the right to keep and bear arms” is a new political idea, Schmidt said. “It’s not controversial in general, but those opposed to more relaxed gun laws and more gun rights see it as another obstacle to any state gun control laws,” Schmidt said. During the 2021 Iowa legislative session, Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a law that removed the requirement for a permit to attain, purchase, or carry a gun in a public place. A *Des Moines Register* Iowa poll found that around two-thirds of Iowans opposed the new law signed by Reynolds. Now that Iowa does not require a background check or the purchase of a permit to car-

ry a concealed weapon, the state ranks No. 31 in terms of gun control law strength, according to a ranking by Everytown for Gun Safety, a non-profit advocacy group that advocates for better gun control laws. A 2020 poll by Giffords and Public Policy Polling revealed that 79 percent of Iowa voters support background checks being required to purchase a firearm. Compared to other Republican states, Iowa is ranked low for gun control law strength. Florida is No. 19 and Texas is ranked under Iowa at No. 32.

**Republicans and Democrats have different interpretations of Second Amendment**

Schmidt said the Second Amendment has been broadly interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court to side with gun rights activists, often expanding rights. However, the federal government has successfully passed restrictions on certain firearms. In 2022, the U.S. Congress passed a gun control bill that implemented stricter background

checks for young buyers and promoted states to take guns away from potentially dangerous people. “Conservatives especially believe that gun ownership is a fundamental, almost sacred, right in the United States,” Schmidt said. “In part to defend oneself and also, in case it’s needed, to defend against an oppressive government, and the gun industry has also been lobbying very successfully to reduce restrictions.” As laws related to the Second Amendment are being introduced around the country, so has more debate about the need for such laws. Indiana introduced nearly a dozen laws expanding gun rights, according to the *Indianapolis Star*. Lawmakers have introduced laws allowing retired police officers to bring guns onto school grounds, providing tax credits for buying gun safes, and providing penalties for improperly storing firearms. “Second Amendment is necessary to protect us from anyone getting you to know, using guns against us, or using weap-

ons against us or infringing on our, you know, seeking to harm us physically,” said Brad Cranstons, a pastor and lobbyist for Iowa Baptists for Biblical Values. Rep. Adam Zabner, D-Iowa City, said legislators who are opposed to these bills do not want to infringe on the Second Amendment. Zabner was a vocal opponent of the 2022 midterm vote on the Second Amendment because he was not a fan of the language used to write the amendment. “What we are saying is that we have to make sure that folks who buy guns are in the right mindset to make that purchase, have had a background check,” Zabner said. Zabner said legislation that will create safety laws and guidelines for owning a gun could save lives. “I think there is a compromise to be found ... we should be able to find common ground here,” Zabner said. While gun-related bills have been introduced in the legislature, legislators are reminded of the 2022 Des Moines High School shooting that killed a 15-year-old stu-

dent and injured two other students. Zabner said it should not be the responsibility of children to worry about protection against firearms while on school property. “It is absolutely my firmly held belief that adults are responsible for protecting children, and that first starts with protecting them in the case of guns, that first starts with protecting children from being surrounded by guns in situations when they should be safe,” Zabner said. “That means addressing the systemic issues that lead to guns being available so readily.” As Iowa and other states implement less restrictive gun laws, gun violence could grow as well, Schmidt said. “The terrible school and workplace shootings and an epidemic of gun suicides especially among veterans are growing challenges to American democracy,” Schmidt said. “Unfortunately, there is no consensus on how to address this problem.”

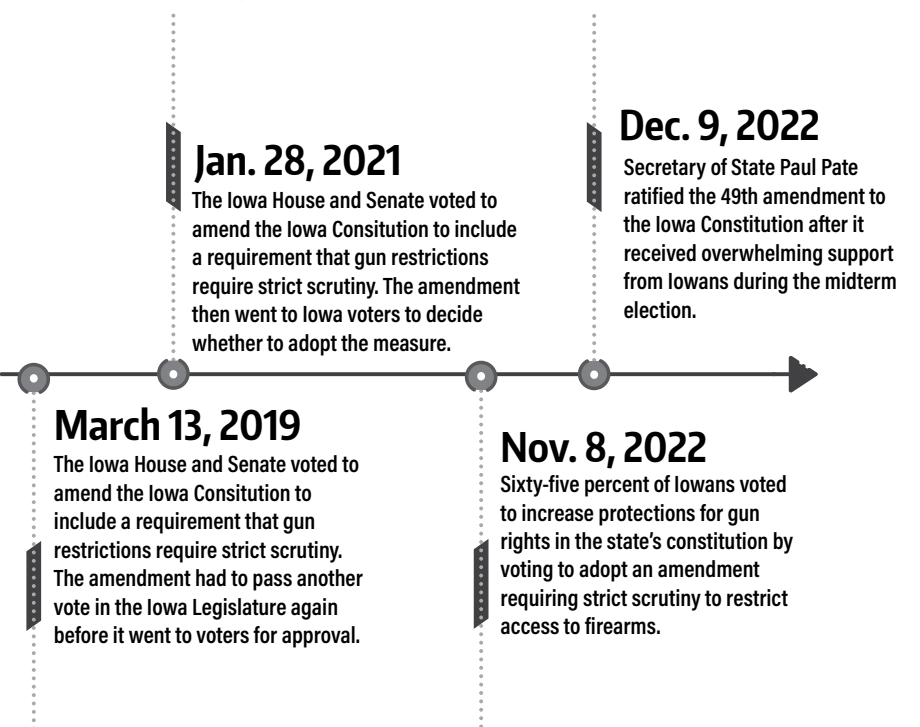
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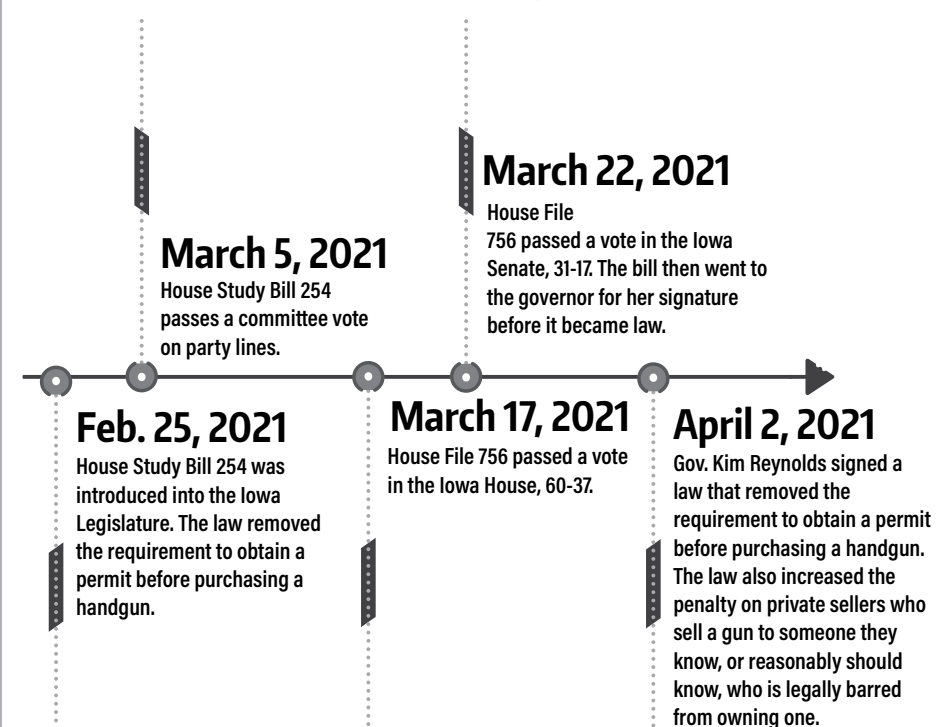
Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

Adam Zabner, the Democratic nominee for Iowa House Districts 90 and 89, speaks to attendees after an event in the Iowa Memorial Union Leadership Room on Oct. 3, 2022.

**Timeline of changes to Second Amendment in Iowa Constitution**



**Timeline of removal of Iowa handgun permit requirement**



# Opinions

COLUMN

## Gun violence is a public health concern

The psychosocial impacts of increased gun violence are impacting U.S. communities.



Yasmina Sahir  
Opinions Columnist

Gun violence needs attention before more lives are lost or indirectly impacted by lethal firearm use.

Gun Violence Archive counted 9,075 gun-related deaths in 2023, as of March 20. While this number is already too high, reports of gun violence never include the number of lives changed for every individual indirectly harmed by gun violence.

If the psychological and social effects of gun violence on American communities are considered as important as protecting the right to carry, there is no choice but to pursue stricter regulations on gun ownership, usage, and concealed carry licensing in Iowa.

The BBC reported 19,000 U.S. gun related deaths in 2020 — a 34 percent increase from 2019 and

the most violent year for gun related deaths since 1985. 2020 was the most violent year for gun related deaths since 1985.

The Pew Research Center noted this number is the total number of gun related deaths, but it does not consider population growth. The year with the highest rate of gun deaths per 100,000 people in the U.S. was 1974.

Another gap in these statistics is that those numbers report only people directly affected by gun violence. But for each life lost, there are family, friends, and community members negatively impacted by the aftermath of a shooting, suicide by gun, or other lethal encounter with a firearm.

The Education Fund to Stop Gun Violence notes people may experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression and may develop sleep problems, intrusive thoughts, or personality changes in response to experiencing gun violence directly or through knowing someone who was directly affected.

It is important to recognize that gun violence does

not affect us all equally. White, cisgender men are most likely to be gun owners, while communities of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and other marginalized groups are most likely to be victims of gun violence.

Communities at risk may experience negative social and psychological effects of gun violence even if they are not directly impacted. The idea that “I could be next” based on identity, gender expression, or demographics does not require a personal violent event to acknowledge that living one’s life authentically may make them a target.

Bills targeting transgender Iowans and diversity efforts in public schools send a message that marginalized communities are not welcome in this state and deserve little protections from violence. This places a larger target on the backs of individuals who are already at greater risk of harm compared to their straight, cisgender, white peers.

Some solutions include investing in community intervention programs, researching effective methods for dispelling the idea

that guns solve interpersonal problems, and utilizing mental health services trained to communicate the risks of guns to at-risk communities — especially youth.

Hospital-based intervention programs connect gunshot or stab wound victims to social workers or therapists to discuss how retaliation is not a form of justice. Outside of hospital settings, studies show cleaning up abandoned areas, creating greener communities, and reducing the sale and consumption of alcohol lower gun violence rates.

Partnering with law enforcement is also an option. In Oakland, California, the city’s Cease-fire Program brings together individuals and groups known to engage in gun violence with police, who educate them on how

violence impacts their community members. Participants are also taught alternative methods to violence to meet their needs and achieve personal goals.

There are many reasons a person might support increasing regulations for gun usage and own-

ship. Decreasing the rate of self-harm by guns, keeping at-risk communities safe from mass violence, and protecting the mental health of children are just some of them.

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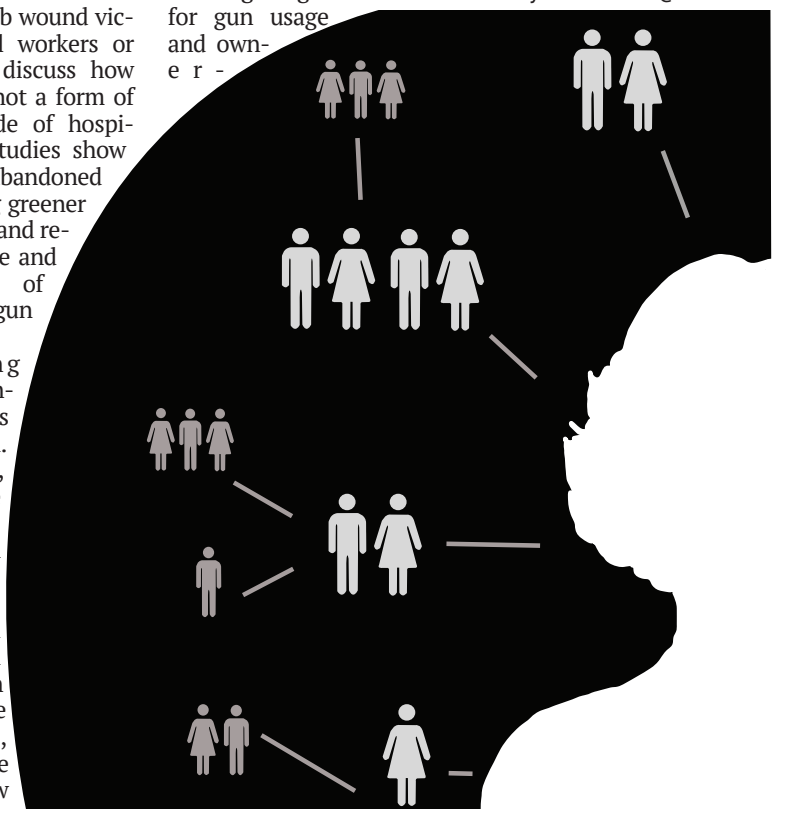


Illustration by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

COLUMN

## The promise of the U.S. Constitution

Gun violence has stripped Americans of their right the constitution was supposed to guarantee.



Shahab Khan  
Opinions Columnist

The U.S. Constitution is a social contract between the government and the people to guarantee every American the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But the current interpretation of the Second Amendment violates those inalienable rights the constitution was designed to protect. Social construct theory was originally defined by the 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes to explain the political organization

of human societies.

In Hobbes’ view, humans are predisposed to violence and act on violent urges. The prevalence of violence prevents humans from advancing as a civilization, as all resources are allocated toward waging war.

But if there is an external force — or what Hobbes calls a “Leviathan” — that can regulate human behavior, violence will decrease.

The Leviathan, in other words, is a government that can protect a population because it is a centralized state that has enough resources to create an army for defense. Hobbes’ only stipulation is that to fund this army, the population has to give up their liberty.

The founding fathers were influenced by social

contract theory. However, it was the social contract theory of Hobbes’s successor, John Locke, that the fathers modeled the constitution on.

In Locke’s view, the government’s responsibility to its citizens is to allow them to pursue the aforementioned unalienable rights. Locke concludes that the best form of government is a weak, decentralized government.

While Locke’s social contract is an improvement over Hobbes’, it fails to adequately address the security concerns that people have. Therefore, the perfect synthesis of the two social contracts would be a state that can guarantee the protection of a population while also allowing that population to exercise their unalienable rights.

Unfortunately, the Second Amendment does not allow for that.

The U.S. Supreme Court currently defines that the Second Amendment guarantees that individuals have the right to use guns as a weapon of self-defense.

This interpretation of the Second Amendment has led to the proliferation of the number of guns in the U.S., with 120.5 firearms per 100 people, Bloomberg News reported in 2022. Furthermore, some states have taken the doctrine of self-defense even further.

In fact, Iowa Republicans used the self-defense argument a year and a half ago when the state government passed a law allowing individuals to carry guns in public without permits. Laws like this

have led to the erosion of U.S. governing institution’s monopolization of violence.

If many individuals have easy access to guns, it is probable that some of these guns could end up being used for violence.

Criminal organizations such as gangs could obtain guns through straw purchases or theft. Meanwhile, nearly 1 million women have been shot at by an intimate partner raising concerns about domestic violence and gun use. Finally, out of almost 45,000 gun deaths in 2020, over half of those were suicides.

Simply put, U.S. governing institutions do not have the necessary authority to reduce gun violence. This is because of the handicaps caused by the current interpretation

of the Second Amendment. Thus, making it so the U.S. government is not fulfilling its promise to guarantee the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness.

There are many great plans to reduce gun violence, such as implementing more regulations on who can purchase guns and hiring more federal agents to confiscate illegal guns.

Unfortunately, none of these plans can be implemented until we realize that the current interpretation of the Second Amendment inadvertently allows people to commit violent crimes against their fellow Americans.

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COLUMN

## Focus on the ‘who’ in gun policy

When gun crimes occur, the perpetrators need to be addressed.



Chris Klepach  
Opinions Columnist

Gun rights have been a heated debate among both sides of the aisle for years.

No matter what side of the issue we stand on, one thing needs to be clear: It is the people who commit acts of violence with firearms, not the firearms themselves.

In Iowa, we should pay attention to the mental health of potential firearm owners by criminalizing firearm possession — not

only purchases — to those with a concerning mental health background.

This must be considered when firearms are called into the question of law. Within reason, we shouldn’t restrict the accessibility. Instead, we need to enact laws that prevent firearms getting into the wrong hands.

Left-wing activists and most Democrats want to restrict access to firearms through extensive background checks and prohibiting open carry by citizens. The argument is that gun violence can be curbed with tighter regulation for firearms. Meanwhile, the majority of conservatives and Republicans believe firearms should be sold with little federal involve-

ment.

Gun laws in Iowa have changed drastically over the years. On Nov. 9, 2022, Iowa voters decided whether firearms are a fundamental individual right to ensure rights to arms at the state level. This amendment passed with 65.2 percent of the vote.

The new language redefines firearm ownership as a fundamental right:

“The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed,” the Iowa Constitution now reads. “The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny.”

This aligns with Iowa’s

relatively loose firearm restrictions, including concealed carry of firearms. In Iowa, no permit is needed to conceal carry if the carrier is old enough and eligible for a firearm possession permit.

Other states around Iowa have responded differently to issues surrounding firearms. They set an example for how Iowa can prevent gun violence without binding the hands of future or current firearm owners.

In Wisconsin, possession of a firearm is illegal for those who have been found not guilty of a crime by pleading insanity. This law also applies to those committed for treatment because of a developmental disability, drug dependency, or mental illness

and have been ordered not to possess a firearm.

But Iowa does not prohibit those with mental health issues to have a firearm.

There is a common misconception that those with mental illness are always responsible for gun violence. Most of those with mental illness don’t enact violence against others. According to Everytown For Gun Safety, the leading cause of firearm death in Iowa during 2022 was suicide, at 78 percent, and homicide, at 19 percent.

Iowa only requires mental health reporting on purchasing firearms. We should take this a step further because a person can already be in possession of a firearm through means

of previous ownership before a diagnosis, being given a firearm, or living in a household with a firearm.

If our legislature had measures in place to reduce firearm access to mentally vulnerable individuals, it could reduce firearm fatalities. This can be done by adopting a similar legislature that Wisconsin has.

It is the people and their mental health that we should worry about in Iowa. We shouldn’t be looking at attachments or models, but the people themselves.

If we worry about individuals before firearms, we can stop the trigger from being pulled.

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THE DAILY IOWAN which has been serving the University of Iowa, Johnson County, and state of Iowa communities for over 150 years, is committed to fair and accurate coverage of events and issues concerning these areas. The DI is committed to correctly representing the communities it serves, especially those most underrepresented or marginalized. The DI welcomes any input on how our coverage can be improved to better serve our audience.

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GUEST OPINIONS must be arranged with the Opinions Editor at least three days prior to the desired date of publication. Guest opinions are selected and edited in accordance with length, subject relevance, and space considerations. The DI will only publish one submission per author per month. No advertisements or mass mailings, please.

READER COMMENTS that may appear were originally posted on dailyiowan.com or on the DI’s social media platforms in response to published material. Comments will be chosen for print publication when they are deemed to forward public discussion. They may be edited for length and style.

# ICCSA students continue gun violence fight

Students express their frustrations with getting their messages heard.



Grace Smith/The Daily Iowan

A notebook leans against a student's backpack during a protest against gun violence put on by Iowa City High School students on the Pentacrest at the University of Iowa on Dec. 1, 2022. The protest hosted student speakers and provided an opportunity for attendees to speak.

Archie Wagner  
News Reporter

Growing up in the era of mass shootings, Iowa City High School students Sasha Ackerman and Peter Brozine kept asking themselves what they could do to address gun violence.

Brozine made a point to stay educated by watching and reading the news, but he thought he couldn't do anything because he was a child. His perspective changed after seeing his peers hold an anti-gun violence protest.

"In eighth grade, somebody from City High hosted a protest, and so then I was like, 'Hey, I'm finally old enough that people will listen,'" he said.

Nationwide, students have protested against gun violence through organizations like March For Our Lives. But advocacy is also happening at the local level, including in Iowa City.

Ackerman said the first protest she attended oc-

curred during elementary school when her mother decided to take her to an anti-gun violence protest.

"There was some students that shared their stories and their fear, and it was like really poetic, their speeches. And it just, I was young, and it scared me," Ackerman said.

As more protests happened in recent years, Ackerman said she has tried to educate herself on the issues of gun violence.

In December 2022, around 100 K-12 students and Iowa City community members participated in a protest against gun violence that was organized by high school students. A similar protest also occurred in June 2022 that was organized by K-12 students in Iowa City schools that called for stricter gun laws and active shooter drills.

When hosting their first protest about gun violence, which occurred when they were in middle school, Bro-

zine said he reached out to the principal at South East Junior High School, who helped the students access politicians' contact information.

The principal also informed the students of lockdown training for teachers where police come in to shoot blanks to simulate a school shooting, he said.

"She pointed out that, even though the teachers are [like] no, it's not real, it's still very traumatic for them," Brozine said. "I don't think training should be mandatory because obviously, that's very traumatic, but I feel like they should at least give us the option. So that way we have, even if we don't make use of it, we still have that knowledge."

Ackerman said Iowa K-12 schools should practice gun violence prevention.

"I know from my school, it's really easy to get in. Yeah, they lock the doors, but you can just press the button on the lock," Ackerman said.

"You don't even have to show your ID, and they let you in."

While walking in the halls at school, Ackerman said she sometimes flinches when she turns a corner and sees someone because of her fear of active shooters.

Brozine said whenever he is in an area — whether a classroom, bathroom, hallway, or a concert venue — he makes sure to have an exit plan because of rising gun violence.

"It's getting really common," he said. "A lot of the adults I talk to are like, it is not that common. It probably won't happen, but it could though."

When organizing protests, Brozine said it's important to take into account what will impact the intended audience.

"We probably won't do anymore walkouts for awhile because we had, like, four or five of them last year, and eventually, it doesn't have as much of

like the shock value, which is very important when you want to get the media's attention and the people's attention," Brozine said.

Once a plan for a protest is formed, he said, students put up posters in school and around downtown Iowa City to reach an audience beyond the middle and high schools. Brozine and Ackerman said they reach out to their friends in middle school to increase the circulation of posters and word of mouth in addition to posting on social media.

"When you are hosting a protest, you want to make sure you're, you know, letting people know what your goal is, why you're protesting, and what you want to get out of it," Ackerman said.

Brozine said their main goal is gun reform.

"When we say gun reform and gun control, we mean things like better background checks, not al-

lowing the public to have high powered machine guns," Brozine said.

Ackerman said another important facet of gun reform is closing loopholes in legislation such as gun show sales.

"It's not a law that those vendors have to do background checks. So even if people have a history in abuse or violence, they can still get a gun, and those people won't know about it," she said. "They need to do better on the background checks with that."

Ackerman said Gov. Kim Reynolds should do more to prevent gun violence.

"[Reynolds] said, like, gun violence isn't her biggest issue right now, and that's a huge problem to me," she said. "I'll go on the news, and I'll see like a shooting in Maquoketa, a shooting in Des Moines, and it's just getting closer and closer."

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# UIHC, Mercy medical directors prepare for high influx of gunshot victims

As gun-related injuries increase, UI Hospitals and Clinics and Mercy Medical Center share treatment plans.

Sofia Mamakos  
News Reporter

Medical directors at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics and Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids are preparing for high levels of gun violence victims as the rate of gun deaths and injuries rise in Iowa.

According to data from EveryStat, the number of gun deaths increased 59 percent from 2012 to 2021 in Iowa, compared to a 39 percent increase nationwide. In an average year for the state, 302 people die and 511 are injured by guns.

UIHC Director of Safety and Security Douglas Vance said UIHC has seen an uptick in shootings in Johnson County.

The Daily Iowan reported in December 2022 that Johnson County recorded a rise in gun crime and felony gun violations.

"We have seen an increased number of shootings in the Johnson County area, but I would say the vast majority of our patients are not from

here," Vance said.

UIHC is a level-one trauma center, meaning that it can provide care for every aspect of injury from prevention to rehabilitation. This also makes UIHC a referral resource for communities in nearby regions.

Alison Harmon, UIHC director of emergency medical transport services, said the emergency room treated 66 gunshot wounds in 2022.

The hospital receives gun violence victims from all across the state — something UIHC prepares for, Harmon said.

"They're transferred here for our higher level of care," she said. "This is what we do in emergency medicine. We have a strong partnership with our trauma colleagues, and so this [taking on multiple gunshot victims] is something that we train, and we review on a frequent basis."

Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids also has a systematic approach to treating gunshot victims, Matthew Aucutt, Mercy



Matt Aucutt

Cedar Rapids emergency department medical director, said.

"You do a primary survey where you're assessing airway, breathing, circulation, and then disability," Aucutt said. "Then, we do a secondary survey where we then kind of go over the whole body, from head to toe, a little bit more detailed exam, but first you want to quickly identify something that could be life-threatening that you need to correct right away."

The most life-threatening injuries would be those that target the head and chest, Aucutt said.

"If it hits a bone, it's not as bad as if it hits your aorta or a large vessel where you could bleed to death," he said. "The larger caliber bullet, the more lethal it is."



Photo Illustration by Emily Nyberg.

Darren Pemberton, UIHC director of emergency preparedness and business continuity, said if the emergency room ever hits capacity, there are procedures to activate the hospital incident command system.

"With that, a team of people will start to then help front load things

for the ER and help make sure all the supplies and equipment are there when they're needed," Pemberton said. "It's really quite the ballet to see all the specialties come together and just put things in action."

Vance said there is a collaborative effort from all teams across UIHC that the hospital uses to

treat gunshot patients.

"It really takes all of us to work together to make this happen," he said. "So sometimes it may look seamless from the outside, and we try very hard to make it look seamless, but it's a lot of collaboration across our enterprise."

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# BY THE NUMBERS

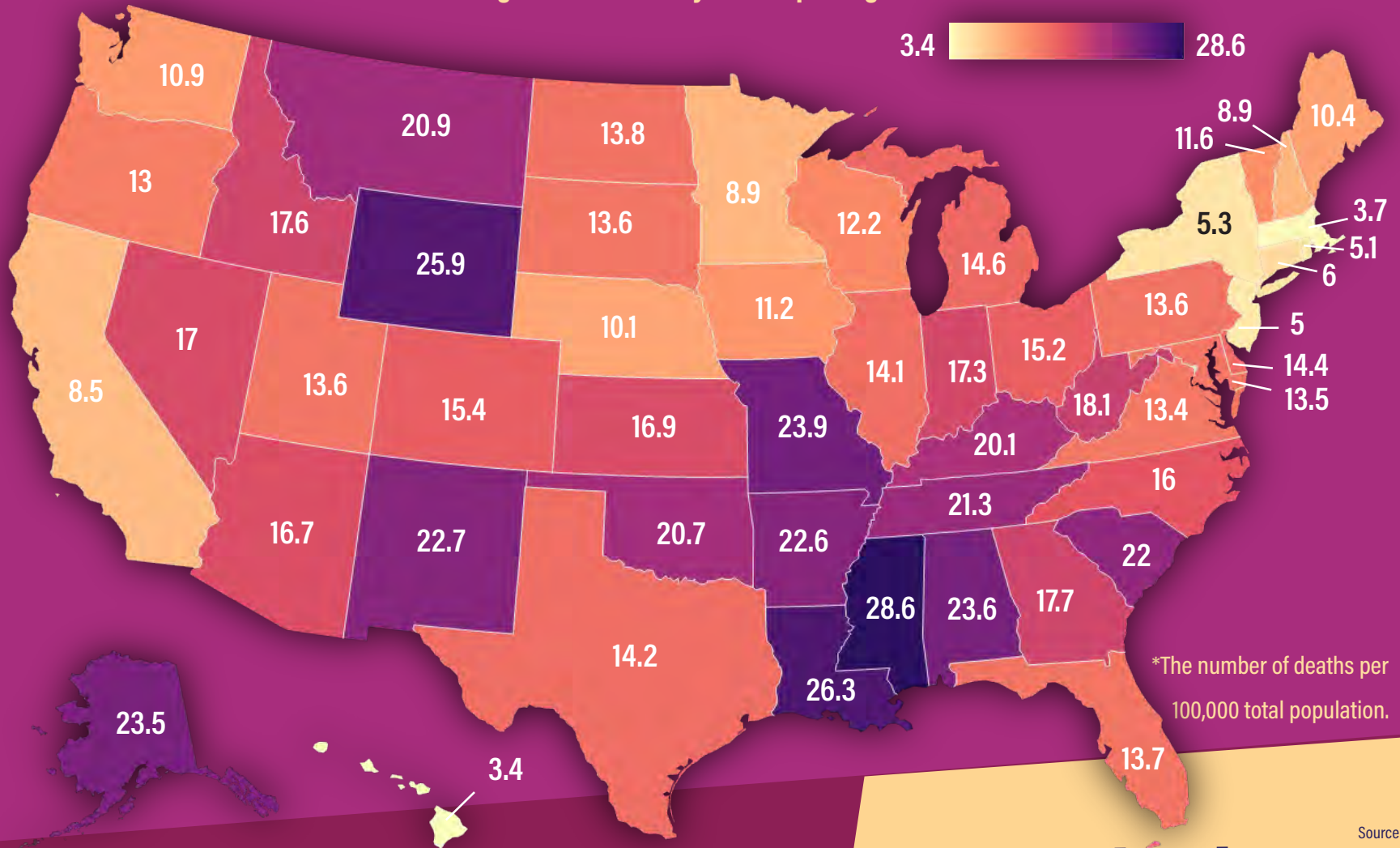
During the exploration of story pitches, *The Daily Iowan* found common data and information that would be useful and visually interesting to show to the Iowa City and University of Iowa communities. In this graphic page, national and state data about issues and topics such as gun deaths and gun restrictions are included.

Visualization | Marandah Mangra-Dutcher/Design Editor  
 Research | Liam Halawith/Politics Editor

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## NATIONAL FIREARM-RELATED DEATHS IN 2020

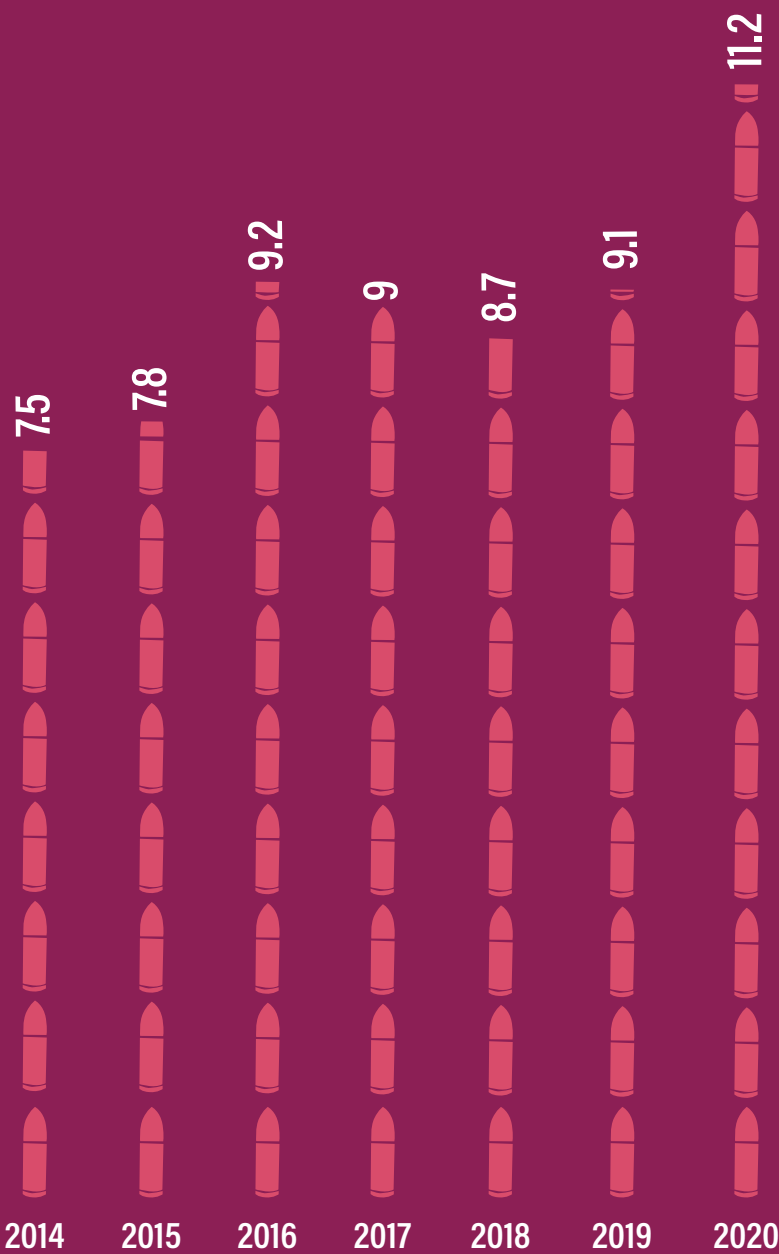
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, utilizing the compressed mortality file, released the number of deaths involving a firearm starting in 2005, continuing the practice in 2014 and until 2020. This map of the U.S. shows the rate of deaths for each state during the most recent year of reporting in 2020.



Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## IOWA GUN DEATHS SINCE 2014

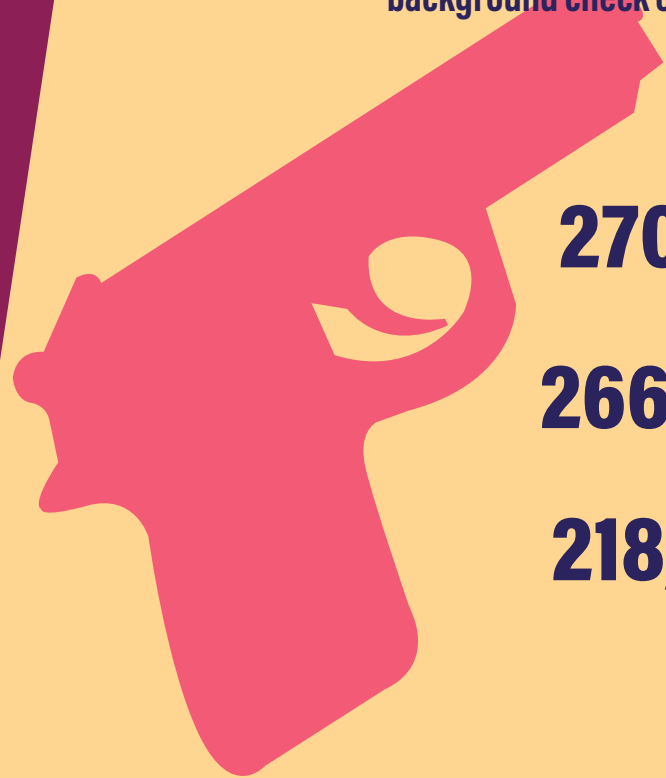
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, utilizing compressed mortality files, shared the number of gun-related deaths in every state in the U.S. The numbers shown are the Iowa-specific numbers from 2014-2020. The data shows a 23 percent increase between 2019 and 2020.



\*The number of deaths per 100,000 total population.

## NICS background checks totals in Iowa

When someone attempts to purchase a firearm, the retailer uses the National Instant Criminal Background Check System if they are a Federal Firearm Licensee to conduct a background check on the buyer.



2020  
**270,614**

2021  
**266,678**

2022  
**218,703**

\*These statistics represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold. Based on varying state laws and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.

## Gun ranges located in the Iowa City area

Located within 25 miles of Iowa City, there are four gun ranges where firearm owners can practice discharging a weapon or get trained to handle firearms.

- Hawkeye WMA Rifle/Handgun Range**  
2248 Amana Road NW, Swisher, IA
- Amana Sportsmans Club**  
W. Ave., Homestead, IA
- West Liberty Gun Club**  
1461 121st St., West Liberty, IA
- Hawkeye Wildlife Shotgun Range & Archery Range**  
2065 Amana Road NW, Swisher, IA

# Airport firearm interceptions on the rise

The Transportation Security Administration reported firearm interceptions rising in Iowa and nationally.



Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

An airport security check is seen in the Des Moines International Airport in Des Moines, Iowa, on March 18.

Alejandro Rojas  
Jack Moore

Firearm detections caught by the Transportation Security Administration increased in 2022 compared to previous years in Iowa airports.

The increases during 2022 varied among Iowa's airports:

- At Des Moines International Airport, 15 guns were caught, which is up from nine caught in 2021.
- At the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, TSA caught six guns, which is one more than the five that they caught in 2021.
- At the Waterloo Regional Airport, one gun was caught, which was the first one caught in five years.

However, the number of Iowa airport gun interceptions are low compared to the top 10 airports in the U.S. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport had 448 guns detected, which was the most in 2022.

In the remaining nine top airports, numbers ranged between 131 to 385 guns caught.

Jessica Mayle, a TSA regional spokesperson, said passengers caught with guns can slow down lines at airports. The TSA cannot arrest individuals with guns or confiscate their weapons. Instead, individuals are charged with a fine, and criminal charges are left to the discretion of local authorities.

"They'll send an officer over, they take possession of the weapon, and then they talk to the passenger and decide what they want to do," Mayle said. "So, the police do have discretion on whether that passenger is going to get a ticket or be arrested that day or not."

Mayle said 88 percent of guns found in 2022 were loaded, and the TSA will impose fines on offenders, ranging from a maximum of \$14,450 for a loaded gun to a maximum of \$5,370 for an unloaded gun.

Despite the risks of fines and arrests for violations, some rules allow for passengers to legally carry their

guns, said Pamela Hinman, director of marketing and communications at the Eastern Iowa Airport.

"There are rules where people can, if they declare travel with a handgun or a gun. So, there are rules for that. But it's the TSA, that's the one that will quote unquote find those [guns], if there's an issue when they're going through the checkpoint," Hinman said.

According to the TSA website, firearms may be permitted for travel if they are "unloaded and locked in a hard-sided container and transported as checked baggage only."

Even though having an undeclared gun is a risk to people's safety, Mayle said most of the time, the passengers had forgotten they had the gun with them.

"Overwhelmingly, we find that the passengers didn't mean to bring the gun, they just sort of forgot that they had a gun in this bag, at this time, and they weren't really thinking," she said. "Again, putting some extra time in before you leave, think about, 'Where's my gun? Do I really need to

be traveling with it today?' It really will have good consequences for you."

Michael Tharp, Iowa City Municipal Airport manager, said although passengers with guns risk fines and arrests when traveling through commercial airports, passengers going to a smaller airport like the Iowa City Municipal Airport can expect different rules.

The airport is a general aviation airport that services anything that isn't commercial or military, and the airport operates under different rules, which in-

cludes rules relating to firearms.

"If you're a commercial flight at a commercial airport ... there are different rules than if you are at that [fixed base operator] or at other places where there might be security standards. But the firearm, specifically the regulation, reverts to the state laws," Tharp said.

Different states have different rules when it comes to firearms, so it's up to the pilot to know ahead of time whether they can legally carry or not in the state they're entering, Tharp said.

Mayle said the TSA had reached a nationwide high of detected guns but added people should feel safe since they are finding them.

"I think the number of guns we're finding and again, the number at Iowa is certainly lower for bigger airports, but nationwide, you know, this is a big problem," she said. "I hope one thing people take away from this is that TSA officers are good at their job, and you should feel safe because we are finding these guns."

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## Firearm interceptions at U.S. and Iowa airports

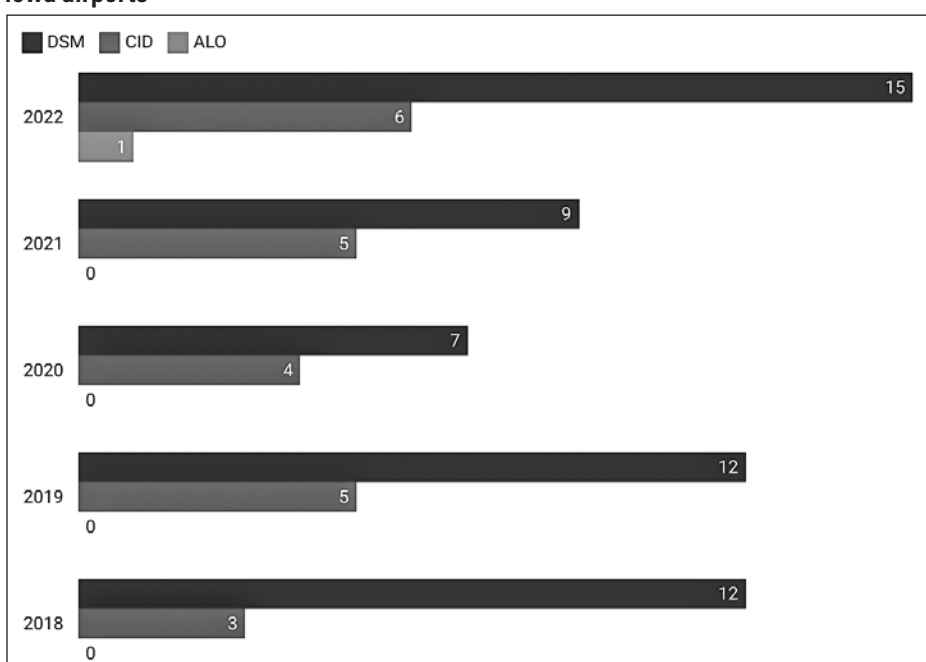
The Transportation Security Administration announced 2022 broke the record for the number of firearm interceptions in any given year.

### U.S. airports



Firearm interceptions at Iowa airports mirror the national numbers after 2020 in terms of increased amounts. The three Iowa airports included in this data are commercial airports that are most frequented in Iowa.

### Iowa airports



Infographics by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

## EPI

# Gun violence intervention advocates persist amid loosening gun regulations

Advocates for gun control face barriers to legislative change in the Republican-controlled Iowa Legislature, but local solutions could offer the answer to community gun violence.

Lauren White  
Politics Reporter

Temple Hiatt's nephew showed signs of mental illness the day of his death. A Red flag gun safety law could have saved his life.

Hiatt, a volunteer with Iowa Moms Demand Action, said legislation should be put in place to minimize harm from firearms. But until that happens, it's up to the community to know how to stay safe. Phillip Travis, Hiatt's nephew, died by suicide from a gun in 2014. This loss has influenced her advocacy by showing her firsthand how gun safety can save lives.

As Iowa legislators loosen up regulations on firearm ownership in the state, gun control activists are continuing to work toward decreasing gun violence through community-based intervention programs.

Hiatt said firearm owners should lock and secure their weapons to keep their loved ones safe, and this is what the organization's Be Smart program focuses on.

"We actually have conversations with people in the community about our program, which empowers parents and adults to ask about the presence of unse-

cured loaded weapons in the homes where their children or grandchildren would go to visit," Hiatt said. "That is something that every person in our community can participate in."

Between 2018 and 2021, gun violence was the cause of death of 1,291 Iowans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of those deaths, 16 were unintentional, 1,017 were death by suicide, and 233 were homicides.

Iowa Moms Demand Action, Hiatt said, has been advocating for a Red flag law in the Iowa Legislature. This law would require medical professionals and law enforcement officers to intervene when a gun owner, or someone who lives around firearms, has a crisis where they may hurt themselves or others.

In 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law an omnibus gun safety bill that included incentives for states to enact Red flag laws like federal funds for awareness campaigns and more.

"With any other means, that cry for help gets a second or third chance," Hiatt said. "You get the chance to get treatment and to have conversations about next steps. When a gun is in-

involved, you don't have that."

Hiatt said she testified at the statehouse against a bill that would require National Rifle Association classes at schools. The main message of the class would teach children not to touch any firearm that they encounter, she said.

"Parents and guardians who believe their child will be safe from touching or using a gun they encounter are given a false sense of security when, in reality, you cannot educate the curiosity out of a child," Hiatt said during her testimony at the statehouse in February. "The responsibility to prevent gun violence should not rest on the judgment of mere children but instead must rest on the gun owner's secure storage procedures."

The bill Hiatt refers to, House File 73, was co-sponsored by Republican Rep. Skyler Wheeler from Orange City and Democratic Rep. Ako Abdul-Samad from Des Moines and did not survive the legislative deadline requiring the bill to pass a committee vote by March 5.

Ruthina Malone, Iowa City Community School District School Board president, said school faculty has been working with the city's equity department to decrease violence at the K-12 level through restorative justice techniques.

Malone said students are given the tools they need to work out issues in a peaceful and communicative way before reacting in a violent manner.

"What we are mainly looking at is the education piece, because as a school district, you know, that's our primary goal is to educate our students, as well as our families, if possible, on things that impact their



Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

Temple Hiatt poses for a portrait outside Edward Jones in Coralville on Tuesday.

"The responsibility to prevent gun violence should not rest on the judgment of mere children but instead must rest on gun owners' secure storage procedures.

— Iowa Moms Demand Action volunteer Temple Hiatt

students," Malone said.

Additionally, Malone said, the school district has approved a plan to place a new system in some of their schools that can pick up on any underlying safety concerns in the school, including if a student or faculty member brings in a weapon.

Malone said school districts in other states that are similar in size are considering adding metal detectors or increasing student resource officers to prevent violence on school grounds, but she said parents in Iowa City have vocalized a concern for both of these measures.

Students in the area, Malone said, are concerned about the nature of weap-

ons that people can own.

They are educated in mass shootings and the damage that firearms can cause, she said, which causes Iowa City's youth to want to see more laws on the state level.

"What was the true essence of the right to bear arms? I get our constitution is precious, but I also think we have to look at it through the eyes of when it was written and get an understanding of if we are doing our best to not only protect our future, but ourselves when it comes to gun violence, gun access, and overall gun education," Malone said.

Iowa City Public Safety Information Officer Lee Hermiston said there was

a 65 percent decrease in confirmed shots fired calls in Iowa City in 2022, from 37 calls in 2021 to 13 calls in 2022. He attributes these results to the partnership between the Iowa City Police Department and the members of the public who are dedicated to keeping Iowa City safe.

Hermiston said the police department has a three-person Street Crimes Action Team dedicated to investigating weapons crimes. In 2022, 121 firearms were seized from unlawful owners, and the team assisted in the seizure of 81 guns.

"Addressing gun violence has been — and continues to be — one of the department's highest priorities," Hermiston said. "We do this through diligently investigating all instances of gun violence and seeking to identify those responsible for these acts and hold them accountable for their actions."

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Photo contributed by Temple Hiatt.

ON THE STREET

# Do UI students feel safe in Iowa City?

University of Iowa students express varying levels of safety in Iowa City

DI Staff

The Daily Iowan spoke with several University of Iowa students to hear about how safe they feel in the area in light of local and national gun violence.

In 2022, 44,320 people in the U.S. died because of gun violence, according to the Gun Violence Archive, an independent non-profit research group dedicated to collecting data about national shootings.

As of March 21, the Archive has reported 116 mass shootings, meaning there's been more than one mass shooting a day in many cases. The Archive classifies mass shootings as incidents where four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter.

Within the past year, Iowa City has also been alerted to local shootings. More recently, Iowa City law enforcement confirmed a gunshot was fired in the early morning on Feb. 26 on South Clinton Street.

A month earlier, on Jan. 14, multiple shots were fired in the Pedestrian Mall near campus, and in October of 2022, one person was killed and another was injured in a shooting outside of H-Bar. H-Bar also experienced a shooting on Aug. 7, in which a woman was shot and survived.

Sydney Libert, Isabelle Foland, and Jack Moore contributed to this report.

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Abigail Adams

"I feel like as a woman, I don't feel safe ever, but especially on this campus, definitely more safe in the day."

"I feel safe, but I also have been like a homebody, so I guess it doesn't really like bother me. But like ... its concerning, but like, also where I'm from, it's a lot less [violence] here."



Anna McCarthy



Emanuel Sanchez

"It depends, like, what time of day it is and if I have people around me or if I'm just walking around with myself ... everyone usually feels safe in the daylight. But when it's nighttime, and I'm just roaming around myself, that's when a little panic starts setting in."

"I feel safe. But, overall, in general, just in public, I think it's a little spooky ... It's probably scarier during nighttime."



Kloe Soukup



Jack Denten

"I feel pretty safe just because of the amount of cops I see driving around, and sometimes I'll see them walking around, so I just feel overall safe."

"Typically, I feel pretty safe just because it's Iowa, and most things don't really happen in Iowa, but I did notice the shootings and stuff like that, so I do keep an ear out ... It's not as bad as I've noticed in other places, like in Chicago or in Georgia where I came from."



Ahmondre Atkins



Gabby Johnson

"I generally do feel pretty safe. I have been out at night just a couple of times due to concerts and stuff like that, and generally there are other students around, and I know that if something were to happen, there are people that I could rely on to help me out of a situation."

"I definitely feel safe in the day. Night, not so much — like I don't walk alone at night."



Gwendolyn Hanson

# UI international students wary of gun violence in America

Some students feel completely safe from gun violence, while others are constantly watching their backs.

Kate Perez  
News Editor

Ming Dong takes preventative measures to stay safe from potential gun violence in Johnson County. Dong said he has subconsciously adopted not going out after 10 p.m., avoiding people on the street, and constantly being on edge and listening for loud noises like gunshots when he is outside or in downtown Iowa City.

"I think it's weird, but I gradually have a sense like, if there's some weird noise or weird behavior, I would just walk away," Dong said. "... That's a little weird, you know, I shouldn't think like that."

Dong, a UI postgraduate student from China, is one of many international students who say they feel varying levels of safety as gun violence rates rise across Johnson County and the U.S.

Johnson County saw an increase in felony gun violations in October 2022, which could be adding to the lack of safety some international students are feeling on campus, in Iowa City, and throughout Johnson County. Additionally, gun violence across the U.S. is contributing to difficulties in recruiting students.

The number of UI international students declined for the fifth year since 2017, according to a 2022 UI report. There were 2,176 total international students in 2021.

Dong said he was aware when he started higher education in the U.S. that gun violence is always a threat. Dong said he came to the U.S. because he has better programs for his area of study: health promotion. But he did not expect gun violence to be as prevalent as it currently is.

"I see this too much, and I'm, like, numbed by it," Dong said. "There's a terminology in psycholo-

gy about this, but it's really, like, I see too much, and I'm like, 'Okay, I just need to do some actions to prevent it,'" he said.

On a national scale, international students have expressed concerns about gun violence in the U.S. In a survey by the World Education Services, a quarter of the 1,920 students surveyed reported that they were concerned with gun violence at their institution.

Russ Ganim, UI associate provost and dean of International Programs, wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that he heard from international student recruits that gun violence is a concern when considering pursuing higher education in the U.S.

"The concerns are not in great numbers, but we are hearing them nonetheless," Ganim wrote. "Gun violence in the U.S. has definitely made international recruitment more challenging."

Ganim wrote that global data has shown some international students decided to make the U.S. their second or third choice for international education because of the gun violence within the country.

Additionally, the students' concerns heavily focus on their safety, both on and off their chosen campus.

However, Ganim wrote he actively tries to ease students' concerns.

"We try to reassure international students and their families that Iowa City is a safe and welcom-



Kate Perez/The Daily Iowan

Hua Wei Lee poses for a portrait under the University of Iowa's International Programs sign in the Old Capitol Mall on March 3. Lee, a third-year international student originally from Taiwan, said he almost always feels safe when out in Iowa City.

ing place, and that the university takes issues of student security very seriously," Ganim wrote.

Becky Hanson, UI associate director of international outreach and recruitment, echoed a similar statement in an email to the *DI*, writing that gun violence across the county is impacting recruitment.

"Fortunately, we are able to promote our smaller city, educated college town with a proven higher level of safety than other parts of the U.S. Incidents of

violence in the U.S. is still a question we get," Hanson wrote.

For some students, gun violence is not of concern in Iowa City. Hua Wei Lee, a third-year UI international student from Taiwan, said violence is a far-off issue that does not affect him.

Lee, who first came to the U.S. as a teenager to attend high school in West Branch, Iowa, said he has never felt unsafe on campus or while downtown in Iowa City. During his time in Iowa as a whole, Lee said, he has always felt completely at ease.

"I never worry about the violence, but I feel like my parents worry about it more. I really just don't care, to be honest," Lee said. "I feel like it's more like my friends back from home that kind of worry about me, but my friends here and I don't care."

In Taiwan, Lee said people typically harm each other with knives as opposed to guns, and he does not see a difference between that type of violence and gun violence.

Lee said he is aware that violence occurs in the U.S. and in Johnson County but does not pay it too much attention.

"I just don't realize anything happens. I don't feel like it's super dangerous. I don't feel like it's super deadly," Lee said. "Probably [I would] if every time I walk on the street I see someone shot, or I see people bleeding on the road or something, but I've never seen that before."

He added that his family, friends, and loved ones back in Taiwan regularly check in on him and are worried about his safety, but he does not see an issue in Johnson County.

While Lee feels secure in his safety, other international students say they are constantly worried about what may happen to them on the UI campus or in Iowa City.

Dong said he has seen social stigmas or stereotypes arise from gun violence, especially among his other international friends. These stereotypes, which Dong said he often sees in media, are leading his friends to sometimes think negatively of different ethnic groups.

"I think that's a more alerting issue than the safety ... this stigmatization, it's not really beneficial for international students to get into society or to not be racist," Dong said. "It's just like a phenomenon ... It's more like implicit bias."

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# Sports

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

THE MOST COMPLETE HAWKEYE SPORTS COVERAGE IN IOWA

DAILYIOWAN.COM

## HAWKEYE UPDATES



### Iowa women's basketball to play Colorado in Sweet 16

Iowa women's basketball found out its Sweet 16 opponent Monday night when Colorado beat Duke in overtime, 61-53. The Hawkeyes will play the sixth-seeded Buffaloes at Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle on Friday at 6:30 p.m.

Colorado earned a berth to the Sweet 16 after an overtime thriller against third-seeded Duke on the Blue Devils' home court in Durham, North Carolina. Colorado and Duke were tied at 50 at the end of regulation, but the Buffaloes pulled away in the extra five minutes for the eight-point victory.

The Buffaloes, part of the Pac-12, are 25-8 on the season.

The Hawkeyes are the only host team to make it out of the Seattle 4 regional first weekend after top-seeded Stanford lost to No. 8 Ole Miss, 54-49, on Sunday night. Texas, the No. 4 seed in the Seattle 4 regional, was also eliminated by No. 5 Louisville.

The winners of Iowa-Colorado and Ole Miss-Louisville will play in the Elite Eight in Seattle on Sunday.



### Iowa women's gymnastics draws Norman regional

The GymHawks will head to Norman, Oklahoma, for NCAA Regionals on March 30 after finishing the season with a No. 25 Road to Nationals ranking. The 36 teams with the best regional qualifying scores qualify for NCAA Regionals.

With this berth, the Hawkeyes now have 23 consecutive NCAA Regional — team or individual — appearances under head coach Larissa Libby.

Iowa will take on Alabama, Kentucky, and Illinois in its session, with Arkansas, Ohio State, NC State, and Ball State competing in the other session. The top two teams in each session will head to the regional final on April 1.

The top two teams from the final session, along with the top all-around competitors and event specialists that are not on an advancing team, will go to the NCAA Championships in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 13 and 15.

## INSIDE



### Hawks in the NBA | March 6-19

Iowa Wolves Jordan Bohannon started three games, averaging 11 points per game in three starts last week.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"ABC has a little bit longer timeouts."**

— Head coach Lisa Bluder on keeping her starters rested after playing over 37 minutes.

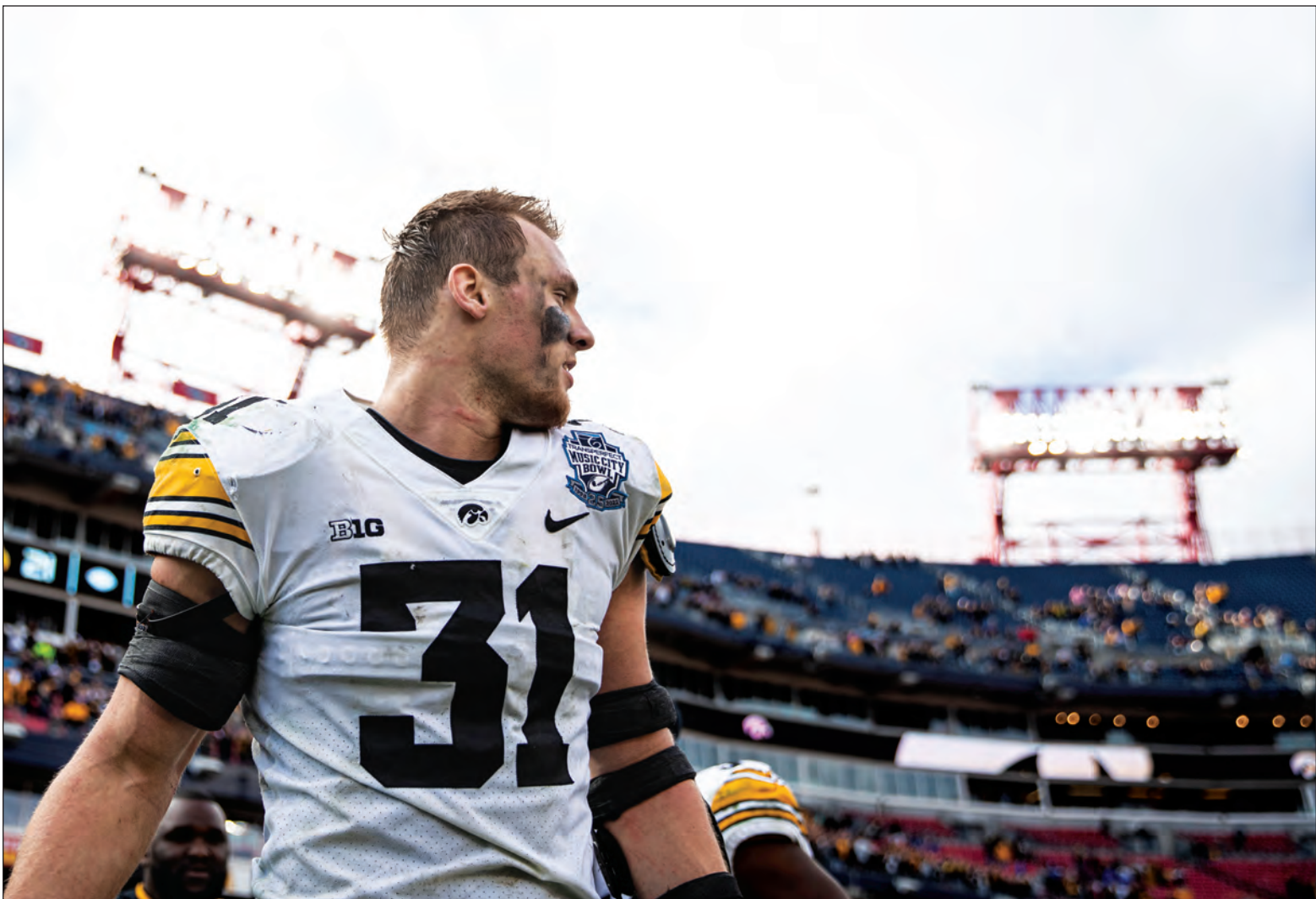
## STAT OF THE DAY

# 14,382

— Iowa women's basketball's attendance in each game of the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament.

# Embracing the process

After his pro day on Monday, former Iowa linebacker Jack Campbell described his preparation and mentality leading up to NFL Draft.



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Iowa linebacker Jack Campbell walks onto the field to celebrate with teammates during the 2022 TransPerfect Music City Bowl between Iowa and Kentucky at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wildcats, 21-0.

### Matt McGowan Sports Reporter

Former Iowa football player Jack Campbell doesn't take any conversation for granted. Whether he's talking to pro football Hall of Famer Dick Butkus, Boston

College and Carolina Panthers legend Luke Kuechly, or simply with members of the media, the Hawkeye linebacker is always striving to take away a lesson from the interaction.

Campbell talked with Butkus on Dec. 8, 2022,

when the Hawkeye was awarded the Butkus Award as the nation's best linebacker. This winter, the 6-foot-5 249-pounder trained with Kuechly in preparation for the NFL Combine in February. These meetings are just memories along the way

for Campbell as he makes his way into the NFL Draft this April.

"I feel like if you don't learn from every single person you come in contact within the world, then you're just wasting time," Campbell said during a media availabili-

ty session after Iowa's pro day on Tuesday. "Just all [of Butkus and Kuechly's] knowledge, it's just a major headpin. Mr. Butkus, how he played the game, is just unbelievable ... With meeting Luke and

CAMPBELL | Page 2B

# The Iowa edge

After Iowa football's pro day on March 20, multiple players said scouts hold players from Iowa in high regard.



Grace Smith/The Daily Iowan

Iowa fullback Monte Pottebaum carries the ball during a football game between No. 16 Iowa and Nebraska at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Nov. 26, 2021. The Hawkeyes defeated the Corn Huskers, 28-21.

### Chris Werner Assistant Sports Editor

Scouts and coaches from across the NFL came to Iowa City on March 20 to meet with former Hawkeye football players set to enter the draft and watch them participate in various drills.

All the players who spoke to the media had already met with representatives from at least a few NFL teams before the pro day. Those players —

including offensive lineman Jack Plumb, fullback Monte Pottebaum, and linebackers Seth Benson and Jack Campbell — said Iowa's reputation among the NFL's roster builders is alive and well.

"I mean, all the guys that come in here already know how [head coach Kirk Ferentz] runs things," Benson said. "... We're going to be detailed, it's going to be, boom, boom, boom. You know, we're doing this, this, this, this, our

guys going to be ready."

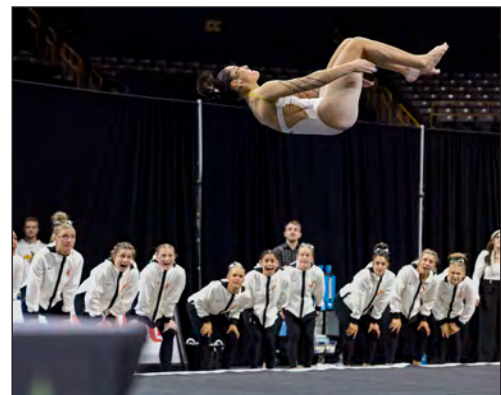
Benson said scouts know what types of players the Iowa coaches recruit, and that gives them comfort when deciding who to look at. Benson also mentioned defensive coordinator Phil Parker as a reason why so many Iowa defensive players get picked up by NFL clubs.

"There's a stability with KF and coach Parker," Ben-

NFL | Page 2B

# Fearless leader

GymHawk Hannah Castillo has been a valued member of the Iowa women's gymnastics team this season — but she's just getting started.



Ayrton Breckenridge/The Daily Iowan

Iowa's Hanna Castillo competes on floor during a gymnastics meet between No. 18 Iowa and Rutgers at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Feb. 18. The Hawkeyes defeated the Scarlet Knights, 196.200-195.125.

### Emma Sachs Sports Reporter

Freshman year can be a scary time for athletes, especially because they're in a totally different environment. But for Iowa gymnastics freshman Hanna Castillo, being in a new state with a new team has brought her the exact opposite.

Castillo, originally from Boca Raton, Florida, has had her eyes set on joining the Hawkeyes from a young age.

"I had committed when I was 13 and about to go into ninth grade. I was a little baby," Castillo said. "For the whole time that I was committed, there wasn't really a question about it. I'd never really wanted to switch to another school because when I came here for camps and everything it was just a great experience."

Castillo consistently competes on floor, where she is the first gymnast in the lineup — a physically and mentally demanding position.

CASTILLO | Page 2B



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# Hawks in the NBA

Sacramento Kings forward Keegan Murray plays a large role in the team's juggernaut offense.



Wendell Cruz-USA TODAY Sports

Mar 16, 2023; Brooklyn, New York, USA; Sacramento Kings forward Keegan Murray (13) drives to the basket in the second quarter against the Brooklyn Nets at Barclays Center.

Colin Votzmeyer  
Sports Reporter

The Sacramento Kings' juggernaut offense is the motor pushing the team closer to ending the franchise's playoff drought, and former Hawkeye forward Keegan Murray is a big reason why.

The Kings have not made the playoffs since the 2006-07 season — the longest an NBA franchise has gone without a post-season appearance. They now sit in second in the Western Conference with a 43-27 record. The biggest reason why is their offensive power. The team averages a league-high 121.1 points per game.

Although guard De'Aaron Fox and forward Domantas Sabonis command most of the attention behind the front-

court play, Murray has made a name for himself, too. On the March 13 episode of First Take, retired NBA big man Kendrick Perkins and ESPN analyst Stephen A. Smith seemed to notice, giving the rookie high praise.

The last two weeks were an indication of that.

Murray opened the Kings' 6-1 stretch with 13 points in the 123-108 win over the New Orleans Pelicans on March 16. He followed that with 11 points on 4-for-8 from the field with six rebounds in the 122-117 win over the New York Knicks on March 9.

Despite a 128-119 win against the Phoenix Suns on March 11, Murray hit his low point. He attempted three shots but did not score in 15 minutes of play, and his plus-minus of -16 was a

team-low.

But persistence was key.

Murray slowly crawled back with seven points in a March 13 loss to the Milwaukee Bucks, nine in a March 15 win over the Chicago Bulls, and 11 on 4-for-8 from the field in a win over the Brooklyn Nets the next night.

Murray finally found his groove again against the Washington Wizards on March 18, scoring 19 points on 7-for-15 from the field and 5-of-10 from three. He included five rebounds and two assists on the night. The Kings won, 132-118.

Murray is now tied with Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry for seventh place on the all-time list for 3-pointers made in a season by a rookie, with 166.

Timberwolves center Luka Garza adhered to that same persistence. Despite spending much of the last two weeks in and out of the team's rotation, he exploded for 14 points on 6-of-7 from the field and 1-of-2 from both deep and the charity stripe in a 136-115 win over the Atlanta Hawks on March 13.

## G League

Garza makes the most of his time when he's with the Timberwolves' G League affiliate Iowa Wolves as well.

He neared a double-double on March 9, notching 29 points on 13-for-22 from the field and nine rebounds in 38 minutes of play. He secured the achievement on March 11, scoring 23

points on 9-for-15 from the field and 13 rebounds, but his six turnovers helped the opposing Rio Grande Valley Vipers to a win.

Raptors guard Joe Wiskamp has seen minimal time on the NBA roster but has gotten much more playing time with the G League Raptors 905.

He scored six, six, and five points in the team's contests on March 6, March 8, and March 9, respectively. But in a narrow win over the Grand Rapids Gold on March 12, Wiskamp dropped 21 points on 8-for-15 from the field, 3-for-7 from deep, and 1-for-1 from the free-throw line in 38 minutes on the court.

He finished the stretch with 13 points and nine rebounds against the Grand Rapids Gold on

March 14, 18 points — including four threes — against the Lakeland Magic on March 16, and another 13 points on three threes in their rematch the next night.

## Other Hawkeys

Salt Lake City Stars center Tyler Cook played six games from March 6-19:

- March 6 win over the Texas Legends: 16 points, six rebounds, eight assists
- March 8 win over the Oklahoma City Blue: 16 points, 10 rebounds, seven assists
- March 10 win over the Oklahoma City Blue: 16 points, seven rebounds, three assists
- March 13 loss to the Stockton Kings: eight points, four rebounds, five assists, six turnovers
- March 15 loss to the Santa Cruz Warriors: 18 points, nine rebounds, team-low plus-minus of -19
- March 19 win over the South Bay Lakers: 23 points on 10-for-14 from the field, nine rebounds

Iowa Wolves guard Jordan Bohannon played in five games from March 9-18:

- March 9 loss to the Rio Grande Valley Vipers: seven points on 2-for-2 from the field
- March 11 loss to the Rio Grande Valley Vipers: three points
- March 13 loss to the Birmingham Squadron: started, 12 points, five rebounds
- March 17 loss to the Santa Cruz Warriors: started, 12 points on 4-for-7 from the field
- March 18 loss to the Santa Cruz Warriors: started, nine points on three threes, four assists

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## CAMPBELL

Continued from Page 1B

other current guys too, hearing how different [the NFL] is. Each team is just so different in what they run; each coordinator likes what they like."

Leading up to the draft, Campbell has had interviews with several teams. In this process, he said teams asked him things like how many sports he played in high school, his family, how he grew up, and why he chose to go to Iowa.

The former football, basketball, and track standout at Cedar Falls High School said talking about his background has been an adjustment.

"We come from this program where it's all team, team, team ... But like now in these individual meetings, like, they're asking you about you, and you got to be able to talk

about yourself. Sometimes it's kind of hard," Campbell said.

Often in these meetings, the quarterback of Iowa's defense for the past few seasons is shown the film of plays during his college career.

These cutups include both his highlights, such as his 5.5 tackles for loss in 2022; as well as his mistakes, like when he was juiced out by Michigan tailback Blake Corum on a touchdown run in the Wolverines' win over the Hawkeyes in October.

"I've just got to learn from it," Campbell said of when teams show him bad plays. "I'm the first one to raise my hand and say, 'I messed up, and that's a bad play.' ... They're just trying to show you stuff you fell short on and just see how you respond. For me, it's always been a level head. Like, even if I make a great play, I don't really care."

NFL analyst Lance Zierlein describes Campbell as "built for the box and plays with good overall physicality ... but lacks the short area burst and reactive athleticism teams typically look for."

While Campbell said he doesn't read what people say about him, he presumes it would be similar to Zierlein's analysis.

"I'd assume, probably a 'solid tackler but really unathletic,'" Campbell said. "People can say all they want about me ... I've always had [criticism], so it doesn't bother me, I'm used to it. I'm always going to have a chip on my shoulder — it's how I was raised."

Reflecting on his journey from a three-star recruit out of high school to a potential second-round draft pick in the NFL, Campbell has learned not just to block out the outside noise, but to be authentic with everyone he



Jerod Ringwald/The Daily Iowan

Iowa linebacker Seth Benson (44) directs the defense during a football game between Iowa and Purdue at Ross-Ade Stadium in West Lafayette, Ind., on Nov. 5, 2022. The Hawkeyes defeated the Boilermakers, 24-3.

interacts with, from NFL owners to custodians.

"I would say the best thing I've learned from this process is to be you, be yourself — don't

change," Campbell said. "Again, like I'm talking to a head coach, GM, or owner — I'm treating them the same way I'm treating our janitor here, Doug."

I'm treating all of them the same. That's who I am and what I'll continue to do."

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## NFL

Continued from Page 1B

son said. "[The scouts and coaches] just know how we're wired, and they tell you that, coming to Iowa, we have an edge on other guys just how we do things."

After the 2020 draft,

Iowa's 75 draft picks since 2000 ranked the Hawkeyes 18th among the 306 schools that had players selected in that period.

In the 2021 and 2022 drafts, Iowa had two and four players selected, respectively.

"I think Iowa does a really good job. We're re-

ally structured," Plumb said. "We call it the Iowa Edge, different than every team, and we've been putting guys in the NFL forever. So, it's a great school to come to get ready for the NFL. I think it shows year in and year out with how many guys we have in the NFL."

Pottebaum said pillars

of the Iowa program came up in a meeting he had with a team on Sunday night.

"I was talking to Steelers last night," Pottebaum said. "And they were talking about how they want players that are tough mentally and physically. The characteristics they're looking for

in a player kind of match up with exactly what Iowa players are in my mind."

Campbell, who is projected to go in the second or third round, said the scouts he talked to communicated to him that drafting an Iowa player is a safe bet.

"I feel like Iowa's put a lot of guys in the league,

and what you see is what you're gonna get," Campbell said. "I feel like there's not many surprises ... a lot of scouts and guys tell me that when they draft an Iowa guy, they know what they're gonna get. They're gonna get a true professional."

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## CASTILLO

Continued from Page 1B

"It's hard to lead off. It's really hard endurance-wise," Iowa head coach Larissa Libby said. "As a gymnast, I never wanted to lead off, and Hanna owns it. A lot of the time, she's one of the counting scores and the higher scores. To lead off and be that good is hard to do."

While being in the lead-off position can be stress-

ful for gymnasts, Castillo loves the pressure.

"I love being in the lead-off spot. It makes me think, 'Okay, no matter what happened in the event before, we're starting out on a fresh event,'" Castillo said. "I gotta be ready to go mentally, and I love having to be in that No. 1 spot so I can set the tone for everyone. I love competing. So, it doesn't really matter to me whether it's at the end or at the front. I love it either way."

Libby said she rarely

chooses a freshman to lead off any event. But Castillo earned that spot, Libby said, and she owns it.

When many gymnasts get nervous at competitions, Castillo doesn't let the stress bother her. Castillo said she loves competing, where she gets to perform for herself and her team.

"Personally, the pressure of it is so exciting. When your heart's about to drop because the judge is about to, like, salute you," Castillo said. "It just

makes it so fun and so surreal. What motivates me is just being able to compete, being able to step out onto that floor and have the judge salute you. I love that feeling, and it's one of the best experiences I could ever have or ask for."

Libby said Castillo's confidence, especially on the floor event, draws in fans, getting them excited about her routine.

Libby also said the floor event allows fans to see the athlete's personality more than the other events.

When Castillo performs with her big personality, Libby said, her confidence is visible to the crowd.

"She is naturally gifted, and she naturally has that desire to be seen," Libby said. "Her performance is what makes her floor routine so good. It's that she is happy to be seen. She dares you not to look at her. And she is very confident, even when she's not. She presents the air that she knows exactly what she's doing."

Castillo's work ethic and

confidence have allowed her to also break into the vault lineup, competing in two events as a freshman.

Despite everything Castillo has accomplished this season, Libby looks forward to seeing how she will continue to grow.

"She does things to perfection, and she works hard in the gym," Libby said of Castillo. "She hasn't even begun to reach what she's capable of doing. She has a lot more in the tank."

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COLUMN

# They just didn't go in

The Hawkeyes lived and died by the 3-pointer this season, and they went cold from long distance at the worst time.



Matt Sindt/The Daily Iowan

Iowa forward Patrick McCaffery talks to reporters after a men's basketball game between eighth-seeded Iowa and ninth-seeded Auburn in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at Legacy Arena in Birmingham, Alabama, on March 16. The Tigers defeated the Hawkeyes, 83-75.

**Chris Werner**  
Assistant Sports Editor

There was a common theme in almost every Fran McCaffery postgame press conference after a loss this season. The Iowa men's basketball head coach would be asked to make an opening statement or asked a question by the media about the loss, and he'd say something along the lines of, "We took good looks from deep, but they didn't go in."

This season — and almost every season he's been the Hawkeye head coach — McCaffery has encouraged his team to shoot

open threes, and when they went down at a clip over 35 percent, the Hawkeyes won 15 times. When Iowa went cold, however, McCaffery's team struggled to get victories.

In their 19 wins this season, the Hawkeyes converted 41.5 percent of their 3-pointers, but in losses, they shot just 24.3 percent.

Iowa made an average of 5.6 threes in its losses and 9.6 in its wins, while putting up an average of 24 deep shots in its defeats and 23 in wins.

And again, after many of his team's losses, McCaffery said Iowa's looks from beyond the arc were

ones he was happy with.

If you want to fact-check me, you can head on over to [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com), click on the men's basketball tab, and select any number of articles about Iowa's losses. I'm 90 percent sure there will be a quote in there about how they were "good looks." I just don't want to comb through them all — think the back-to-back losses to Northwestern on Feb. 19 and Wisconsin on Feb. 22 where Iowa shot 3-of-24 and 3-of-28 from 3-point territory, respectively.

Or, you can just trust that I attended an/or watched all the press con-

ferences.

I'll put it this way: I don't remember McCaffery saying his team took bad 3-point shots often this season, if at all. The majority of you watched the games, too, and I bet you'll agree they weren't bad shots.

But in all but one of Iowa's losses, it made less than 35 percent of its 3s, and under 30 percent in all but two.

Talk about going cold. Iowa won over half its games this season and shot 41.3 percent from

3-point range during those contests, but freshman guard Josh Dix was the only player who saw significant minutes to shoot above 34 percent from beyond the arc this year.

Dix made 14 of his 35 3s, for a 40 percent clip. The players with over 35 3-point attempts this season — Ahron Ulis, Tony Perkins, Payton Sandfort, Patrick McCaffery, Kris Murray, and Connor McCaffery — converted 32, 33, 34, 34, 34, and 33 percent of their 3-pointers,

respectively.

Nobody from last year's roster improved by more than one percentage point, and Murray and Sandfort were down from 39 and 37 percent a year ago, respectively.

The Hawkeyes did pull out four wins while shooting under 35 percent this season, but the last of those victories came before the 2022 calendar turned to December and before Iowa faced any Big Ten teams.

And the Hawkeyes' hot-and-cold shooting from downtown was no more evident than in Iowa's last four games of the season.

After their dramatic win over Michigan State on Feb 25, Iowa went into Bloomington, blew out the then-No. 15 Indiana Hoosiers, 90-68, and shot 13-of-23 in the process.

In their final three games of the season — all with major implications — Iowa went ice cold.

With a No. 2 seed in the Big Ten Tournament on the line, Iowa went 12-for-37 against Nebraska in a 81-77 loss. 4-for-17, against Ohio State in the Hawkeyes' first Big Ten Tournament game, 73-69 loss. And lastly, 7-for-27 in Iowa's first-round defeat in the NCAA Tournament to Auburn, 83-75 loss.

Although Iowa heated up in the second half against Auburn, Fran McCaffery offered a similar answer as he had all season after the Hawkeyes' loss to the Tigers regarding an 0-for-9 showing from deep in the first 20 minutes: "We had a couple clean looks at [3-pointers] early, they didn't go. If they go, maybe it's different."

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# Seeing the glass half full

Daily Iowan sports reporter Kenna Roering breaks down how the 2023 men's wrestling season should be remembered.



Ayrton Breckenridge/The Daily Iowan

The Iowa wrestling team poses for a team picture while being recognized for finishing second after session six of the NCAA Wrestling Championships at BOK Center in Tulsa, Okla., on March 18. Iowa finished with 82.5 points.

**Kenna Roering**  
Sports Reporter

My first NCAA Division I Men's Wrestling Championships experience wasn't far from what I expected in terms of the team race. The Hawkeyes placed runner-up with 82.5 points, trailing Penn State, who crowned two individual champions to finish with 137.5 points.

Iowa also finished second to Penn State at last year's NCAA Tournament, where the Nittany Lions crowned five individual national champions. Iowa was just one of four schools, including Oklahoma State, Virginia Tech, and Missouri to have all 10 wrestlers competing at this year's national tournament. But the Hawkeyes failed to take home any individual titles.

"We have to come back strong. We will. We have character. I believe that," Iowa head coach Tom

Brands said following the tournament. "The hard part is having the right look on your face that has optimism for the future, and it's hard to do right now. I said it last year — I'm an envious guy. I'm jealous. And here we are again."

What made the tournament feel a whole lot less successful for the Hawkeyes was the upset that rocked the entire collegiate wrestling world. Purdue's Matt Ramos pinned Iowa's three-time national champion Spencer Lee in the final second of their semifinal match. The defeat crushed Lee's hopes of becoming Iowa's first-ever four-time national champion as well as his 58-match winning streak.

I was shocked along with the other 16,000 people inside the BOK Center and everyone watching at home. I still don't think I've fully processed what happened

while I'm writing this. It was a heartbreaking finish for those everywhere that have spent the last six seasons rooting for Lee, especially after all the adversity he's been through. I think there's very few people in the world that would battle through such unprecedented circumstances and win a national title with two torn ACLs.

What made it even harder was hearing the sadness in Tom Brands' voice following Lee's loss. In an interview after the semifinal round, Tom Brands said Lee's loss felt tragic to him.

"It's hard. This is really hard," Tom Brands said. "But you still have to move on. As easy as it sounds, that's the next step. It seems cruel to say that because the magnitude of it is high."

Instead of vying for third place, Lee medically forfeited the medal round

and automatically finished sixth at 125 pounds, ending his career with a record of 98-6. This will obviously be Iowa's biggest loss next season, as Lee is now turning his focus to his Olympic and world title aspirations.

But he does plan on staying in Iowa City to train for his future endeavors and to take on more of a mentorship role. I think his presence in Iowa's practice room will be beneficial for the squad's future success.

Out of the Hawkeyes' 10 national tournament qualifiers, 141-pound Real Woods was the only grappler to make it to the championship finals. He fell to Northern Colorado's No. 2 seed Andrew Alirez, 6-4.

But Tom Brands said after the conclusion of the tournament that the Hawkeyes need to see the glass half full and give celebration status to those who earned it.

Woods, a Stanford transfer, became a three-time All-American with his second-place finish — the highest finish of his career. Woods' appearance in the championship match also extended Iowa's streak of NCAA finalists to 33 consecutive tournaments.

Although the loss stings, Woods said he is proud of himself. Hawkeye fans should also be proud of his first season in the Black and Gold. Tom Brands said Woods' resilient character will help him move on from the loss and come back stronger, and I think Woods will be a top contender at 141-pounds again next season.

"That is what life is about, and that's what is so beautiful about this sport," Woods said. "This is the kind of stuff you're going to deal with in life. Through any hardship, you're going to deal with this pain and the fact you need to move forward and move on and continue to grow. That's just life."

Iowa crowned six All-Americans, including Lee and 197-pound Jacob Warner, who became the second and third five-time All-Americans in program history, joining former Hawkeye 174-pounder Michael Kemerer. This marked the 10th consecutive season Iowa's crowned at least five All-Americans.

Warner, 149-pound Max Murin, and 174-pound Nelson Brands combined for six consecutive wins in the consolation bracket to stay in contention for third place following Lee's loss. Warner, the 2022 national runner-up, ended his Hawkeye career fifth on the podium. Penn State's Max Dean, last year's title winner at 197 pounds, finished seventh. This shows how difficult the NCAA tournament is and

why I think every Hawkeye fan should be pleased with six podium finishes.

Murin finished sixth for the first NCAA podium finish of his career. Murin fought to the last second in the quarterfinals against Cornell's eventual four-time NCAA Champion Yianni Diakomihalis. Murin fell, 8-7, marking Diakomihalis's smallest margin of victory throughout his final NCAA tournament run.

Nelson Brands showed his toughness throughout the tournament, coming away with two wins in sudden victory and five wins against top-10 seeds en route to fifth-place, the highest finish of his career. Nelson Brands was recovering from Tommy John surgery and broke his collarbone in October 2022, so I think a fifth-place finish is a big success for the adversity he faced this season.

Tony Cassioppi finished fourth after being pinned by Air Force's Wyatt Hendrickson in the third-place bout, but he still became Iowa's 25th four-time All-American.

So, while I think this tournament and season in general will be remembered more for its failures than feats, there is still a lot to celebrate.

And Tom Brands' squad is already aware there is a lot of reflection and rebuilding to be done for next season, and I guarantee the Hawkeyes feel worse about their own performances than any of the fans ever could.

The Hawkeyes can return seven of their 10 starters next season — as long as Cassioppi, Woods, and Nelson Brands come back for their final season of eligibility.

mckenna-roering@uiowa.edu



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PANDEMIC IN 2020,  
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UP COMEDY SCENE IS  
BACK IN MOTION.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023



# UI students, celebrities take on IC stand-up scene

Stand-up comedy in Iowa City includes open mic nights, theatrical showcases, and a comic legend's national tour.

Parker Jones  
Stella Shipman

Whether it's open mics, professional stand-up routines, or "Joke-E-Oke," Iowa City makes room for laughs.

Although several locations host established comedians, comedy spots also host up-and-coming comics or anyone looking to share some one-liners at bars.

Joystick Comedy Arcade specializes as a venue for comedy. The bar's Monday night open mic started at the Iowa City Yacht Club before moving to Joystick in September 2021.

The rebranded bar hosts open mic nights on Sunday and Thursday and brings in headline acts every Friday and Saturday.

Thursday's open mic is titled "Joke-E-Oke": A comedy open mic in the first half, and then karaoke the rest of the night. "Joke-E-Oke" is hosted by Travis Coltrain, the events coordinator for Joystick and an executive producer for the Floodwater Comedy Festival.

Coltrain wrote in an email to *The Daily Iowan* that Joystick's influence on the comedy scene has reached beyond Iowa City, growing the genre of stand-up for the entire state.

"It's helped give comedians more stage time, a hub to congregate at, and a venue for others to learn about the art of stand-up," Coltrain wrote. "Stand-up is all about practice. Comedy is a muscle that constantly needs motion, and having two open mics a week for comics to use that muscle is amazing."

In addition to offering newcomers the opportunity to practice their material, Joystick also showcases professionals ranging from well-known comics in Iowa to a headliner touring the country. Coltrain wrote that comedy has always been a huge part of Iowa and noted that Joystick was instrumental in reviving that scene since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joystick will host a "Best of Iowa" showcase on

March 31 and two weekends in April, where legendary Iowa comics Donny Townsend and AJ Grill will headline.

In addition to venues like Joystick, Iowa City's comedy scene is furthered by the theatrical takes on the genre from community theaters like Willow Creek Theatre Company.

Willow Creek hosts "Secret Standup" — a student-based DIY comedy showcase — in collaboration with arts organization Public Space One.

Logan Pratt, a senior at the University of Iowa majoring in marketing with a minor in theater, is the current host of Secret Stand-up. He will also serve as an executive producer for the upcoming Floodwater Comedy Festival.

Pratt said he was always interested in trying stand-up and got involved after taking the Standup Comedy Practicum class at the UI in 2019. He said the class, which was taught by UI professor and playwright Megan Gogerty, prepared him with the basics of how to perform stand-up.

"It really taught me what it means to be a comedian, a real comedian, like how to generate material more effectively," Pratt said. "[The class] taught you how to be like a working stand-up comedian, and also how to do stand-up ethically ... so that you're doing it in a way that actually makes people laugh but doesn't put anyone down while you're doing it."

Pratt's current material usually focuses on self-deprecating humor, taking advice from Gogerty's class that it is easier to point the finger at himself rather than someone else or another group. The student comic said that while he enjoys stand-up, he does not plan to pursue it as a career.

Pratt also said his goal as the host of Secret Standup is to get more students involved and to try stand-up for the first time.

He said the comedy scene has suffered post-pandemic, and he

wants to recover the atmosphere that convinced him to give stand-up a try.

"It's really been a challenge as someone who runs a lot of student stuff," Pratt said. "The pre-pandemic vibe was really so different. And so, when I first entered it as a freshman, it was so magical."

Renowned stand-up comedian, actor, director, and writer David Cross can also attest to how the stand-up industry suffered during the onset of COVID-19. Cross performed at The Englert on March 17.

Among Cross' most notable appearances are his role as Tobias Fünke in "Arrested Development" and his recurring role in the second season of "Goliath." His work on "The Ben Stiller Show" earned him an Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Writing in a Variety or Music Program in 1993.

But Cross is best known for comedy. His 1999 comedy special was also named one of the 25 best stand-up comedy specials and concert films of all time by *Rolling Stone* in July 2015.

The comedian had been preparing to kick off November 2021 with a national stand-up tour that



Photo contributed by Logan Pratt

was canceled because of COVID-related concerns. "That's probably creatively one of the most disappointing things I've ever had to do in my life," Cross said in an interview with the *DI*. "I mean, I was ready to go. Theaters were booked. And then, yeah, we had to cancel it."

To make up for the devastating cancellation, Cross recorded a comedy special in New York City titled "I'm From the Future." He wanted to ensure the

material he wrote did not go to waste and was shared with the world when it premiered on his official website in February 2022.

This year, Cross finally embarked on a national tour titled "Worst Daddy in the World," which included his March 17 stop in Iowa City. He will continue touring into next month. His last performance is set for April 14.

Cross said the grueling travel of touring can be challenging, but it is a

small price to pay for the joy of performing comedy routines and entertaining audiences.

"I want [audiences] to laugh, to enjoy themselves, to think it was worth their time and worth their money," Cross said. "For new people or people who haven't seen me before, I hope they remain new fans, and for people who have seen me before, I hope they're satisfied with the new set."

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## The Daily Break

The New York Times Crossword

Puzzle solutions on page 4B

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0215

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ACROSS

- 1 Kit Kat component
- 6 Heal (over)
- 10 "Ruler," in Quechua
- 14 Words before "darned"
- 15 What ice cream and hearts may do
- 16 Transport up a bunny hill
- 17 Investigative journalist and civil rights pioneer who co-founded the N.A.A.C.P.
- 19 Some bunts, in brief
- 20 Exhaust
- 21 Boiling sensation
- 22 California's "Eureka," for one
- 23 Novelist and civil rights activist who wrote "Go Tell It on the Mountain"
- 28 Language in which "eleven" is "once"
- 30 One way to crack
- 31 Holiday pie flavor
- 32 Automated tweeter
- 33 Ribs serving
- 37 "\_\_\_ away!"
- 38 W.W. II-era campaign that helped usher in the civil rights movement ... and a hint to four answers in this puzzle
- 42 Letter after phi
- 43 Make a pit stop at a punk show?
- 45 Bodybuilding supplement co.
- 46 Interrupt, as at a dance
- 48 Rank above a viscount
- 50 Road flare, e.g.
- 52 African American who received a posthumous Medal of Honor for valorous

- service in W.W. II
  - 56 "Star Wars" beeper, informally
  - 57 Nest egg initials
  - 58 Transcript stat
  - 61 When repeated, a sport fish
  - 62 Historian, essayist and civil rights leader who was the first African American to receive a doctorate at Harvard
  - 66 Manipulates
  - 67 Whimper
  - 68 Waze way
  - 69 Trimester, e.g.
  - 70 \_\_\_-bitsy
  - 71 Many, informally
- DOWN
- 1 Consoles whose controllers have wrist straps
  - 2 Hawkeye's player on "M\*A\*S\*H"
  - 3 Griddle goodies
  - 4 Beach retreat?
  - 5 Give juice to
  - 6 Enemy org. in Bond novels
  - 7 Big name
  - 8 "That's \_\_\_ she wrote"
  - 9 K-pop megastars
  - 10 "We're through!"
  - 11 Where to see Timberwolves battle Grizzlies
  - 12 Mojave flora
  - 13 Crime of combustion
  - 18 Competes (for)
  - 22 G.P.s, e.g.

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# Rising country star Roman Alexander to play at Elray's

Roman Alexander returns for his second performance at Elray's Live and Dive and will debut new music on Friday.



Contributed Photo by Working Holiday

Stella Shipman  
Arts Reporter

Country music will grace the main stage of a local downtown bar this Friday, telling stories through songs and entertaining audiences in a welcoming environment.

Roman Alexander will perform on March 24 at Elray's Live and Dive, a downtown bar that has hosted various local, regional, and national performers since it opened in July 2020.

Alexander was named one of Spotify's Hot Country Artists to Watch in 2021 and charted on the Spotify U.S. Viral 50. He is also one of the longest-running independent artists on Spotify's Hot Country playlist.

The singer hails from Parkville, Missouri, a town outside Kansas City. He grew up listening to his uncle's country band, which was influenced by artists like Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. When he entered high school, Alexander began performing live in local bars.

After graduating in 2015, the up-and-comer headed straight for Nashville, Tennessee. He established a social media presence while washing cars at an Audi dealership. Alexander also sold merchandise for artists like Shenandoah, Jo Dee Messina, and Easton Corbin, which helped him build a foundation for his career.

"I had a nice little transition from merch to the music career, and it was nice to be able to see what I liked and didn't like about it," Alexander said. "So, I definitely got my start and learned a lot about myself as a musician doing that job."

Elray's owner Bob Elray said Alexander made a

great impression when he first performed a little over a year ago with Nashville country artist Levi Hummon. He said he considers Alexander a rising country star.

As a self-taught musician, Elray understands the hard work required to establish a musical career and values the importance of supporting rising artists.

"If you're into supporting the arts and into supporting music, I think not just looking at calendars and trying to see who you know and going to those shows, but sort of pushing yourself to discover more music, learn more music and more genres, is certainly good and gets more shows to the market for sure," Elray said.

As a business owner, Elray recognizes that shows for local artists are more important to draw attention to small venues.

Alexander is performing at Elray's for the second time to promote his newest release, "Mess Me Up," and his upcoming track, "Bourbon Street," which will be released to streaming platforms the same day as his appearance at Elray's.

Considering the enthusiasm of audiences at his last show, the country singer looks forward to another great set enjoyed by crowds. Alexander hopes audiences will enjoy themselves and the stories of his songs and interact with him.

"First and foremost, I try to keep it to where [audiences] feel like they can talk to me at any time, like coming up to me at the end of a show," Alexander said. "When they come out to your show, you want to be personable and talk to them. So my number one goal is to make them enjoy the show but make them en-

joy the show enough to want to come over and talk to me after."

In the country music community, Elray's has developed a reputation for sharing music of all kinds and being a good venue for artists. With a production team and staff members who Elray says treat people and artists the right way, artists are often excited to perform there and draw the community to shows.

Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Elray's persevered, undergoing construction and opening the venue to a limited and separated crowd. Now, the business is making the most of loosened COVID-19 restrictions.

"It certainly was a different experience, but it was a good experience," Elray said. "And even though [opening during COVID-19] wasn't our intention, it was still fun to get open."

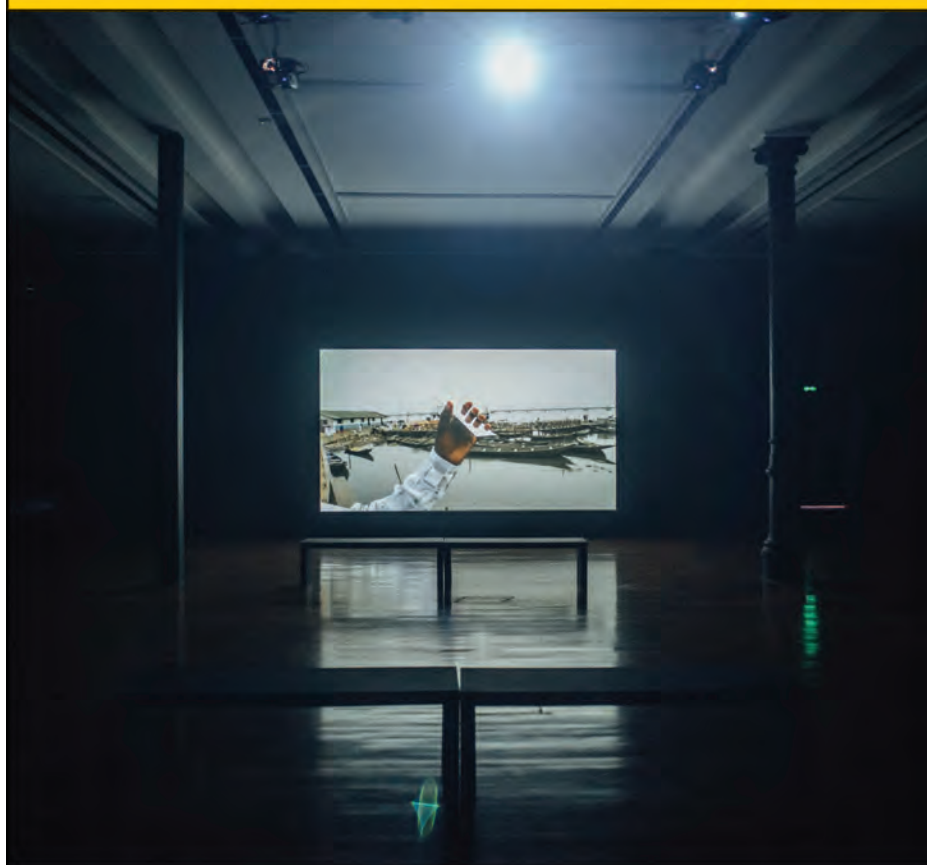
Elray says the bar has several notable acts lined up on the calendar for April, including Kylie Morgan and other Nashville-based artists. He encourages everyone to come out for the performances to support both the artists and the local business.

Both Elray and Alexander anticipate a good turnout on Friday, especially with the release of Alexander's songs. As the rising country star looks to the future, he aspires to tour and play wherever he can and put his name out there.

"You got to prove yourself, and it's going to come down to the song for me," Alexander said. "For me, the aspirations are the really good music — put out good music, record great music, and be on the road nonstop."

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10:30-11:45 a.m.

Artist talk: Aline Motta; Moderator: Tatiana Carvalho Costa  
1:15 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Interventions by Miryam Charles and Aline Motta  
3 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

Performance: Cauleen Smith, Black Utopia LP; Introduction and post-performance conversation: Michael B. Gillespie  
4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

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