



MORGAN COOK

Writer of the Year candidate - Wando High School Newspaper

I never expected the effects of my student journalism to stretch across the globe.

But tackling a heated controversy in our own school district led me on an unplanned journey to see the true power of solid investigative journalism.

Starting our second issue, I sat down with my co-editor and adviser to figure out what we wanted and we decided to cover the recent school board controversies and Moms for Liberty.

I first sat down and created a timeline of the events that had happened. First, a new superintendent was hired. Then a complaint was filed against him. A secret meeting was held by five Moms for Liberty backed members to put him on paid administrative leave, excluding the other four members. Nothing was released about the complaint or the meeting to the public. It was a mess.

I was able to get in contact with the chapter chair of Moms for Liberty in Charleston; however, after initially agreeing to an interview, she only gave me a written statement in response to her organization.

I sat in my office for about a week, calling and leaving messages only to be ignored. I started to feel defeated as I had a story with just facts and no interviews.

Leaving school, one day I saw a sign about book bannings. I took a picture of it, and later researched the organization. Defense of Democracy had started in response to Moms for Liberty, and the CEO gave me a passionate interview.

From there, I started writing both of my stories. I wasn't able to get many interviews; however I was able to use interviews from other sources, and any information I could find.

Getting closer to sendoff I was exhausted. I had spent the last three weeks pouring my entire soul into these stories, making sure that every piece of information was correct, so no one could come after what I had written.

While I had thought everything was slowly cooling down, the district released a statement saying that the

superintendent and the board were parting ways, and an interim would take place. Scrambling, I had to update my story, while cutting both to fit on the page, hours before send off.

We were able to send off, however fear and anxiety consumed me. While what I had written wasn't new, I was nervous to see how people would react to a high school publication covering it. We got it up on our website and waited for the printed copies to arrive.

But we could have never predicted how the online community would react.

Overnight, our publication went viral on Twitter as multiple people and organizations started reposting our stories. We received mostly praise for what we had written. Our adviser and myself received multiple emails, thanking us for publishing what we did.

The whole experience was surreal. Our website saw an immediate spike in traffic and was accessed by people in every continent in the world except Antarctica, and Lowcountry Teachers Advocates Twitter repost had received over 66,000 views. While I know we received backlash, they all went straight to our principal. However, we never received any negative feedback from the administration or the district. I believe the solid journalism we produced prevented any complaints of substance or calls for action against us.

Writing these two stories was exhausting, but incredibly rewarding. I learned how to write about controversial topics that were affecting my community, along with staying alert and up to date with quick changes. I learned how to adjust when ignored, and how to use my resources effectively. But most importantly, I learned how important student journalism is and the impact our voice can have.

Our voice allowed others to see our opinion about our district's actions. Our voice reached thousands across the country and thousands of people were able to see just how much we cared. Our voice enabled us to be seen. To be heard. That's the power of student journalism.

DISARRAY DOWNTOWN

School board controversies divide district, community

Morgan Cook
Editor in Chief

The Charleston County School District school board has sparked numerous controversies including secret board meetings over the superintendent, withholding public knowledge, and comments regarding race and sexuality as well as tumultuous public board meetings.

On Sept. 25, five school board members voted to place Superintendent Eric Gallien on paid administrative leave. This meeting, however, was held in secret, breaking Freedom of Information Act law, according to media attorney Jay Bender.

“Starting back, at least as early as the search to hire the superintendent who has now been suspended, it appears that there is a majority of the board that meets in secret to make decisions on matters such as the agenda, and when to call a meeting, and what action will be taken at that meeting,” Bender said.

Board members can hold meetings as long as all information is released and permitted for public knowledge, Bender said. Reasons for the meeting must be specifically provided, and the only information given was that a complaint was filed against Gallien for creating a hostile work environment.

On Oct. 27, the Board of Trustees reached a mutual agreement with Gallien after an investigation. The investigation cleared Gallien of any wrongdoing, but he chose to leave the job, according to a district press release. Anita Huggins has been appointed as acting superintendent.

“So what the school board majority has done, in addition to violating the law, is diminish the credibility that it and the school board as a whole and probably the school district, have in the community,” Bender said.

The five members who voted in favor of the suspension of Gallien are Carlotta Bailey, Edward Kelley, Keith Grybowski, Leah Whitley and Pamela McKinney, all of whom are backed by the right-wing Moms for Liberty organization. The Charleston County chapter of declined to comment on recent board events.

Just two days later, 15 high school principals, including Principal Chas Coker, came together to write and sign a letter expressing their disapproval with the recent events. The letter states, “Both in terms of substance and conduct the meeting did not meet basic standards of good governance that we expect from ourselves, our leaders, and our elected officials.”

“We would like to see the board work as a unit and handle differences of opinions, and handle them... more delicately than... they are handling them,” Coker said. “Since they’re an example for students... showing how you can work through differences and come to a common good.”

Coker said he signed the letter to show unity with the principals in the district.

On Oct. 1, in an interview with NBC News 2, State Representative Joe Bustos, the Republican chairman of the Charleston legislative delegation, wrote to Gov. Henry McMaster stating the recent controversies around the school board should be investigated by the state.

A day later, Rep. Wendell Gilliard called upon Attorney General Alan Wilson for an investigation involving the school

board’s actions.

“The Moms for Liberty are using their position on the school board to bully and intimidate the superintendent, and their attacks are clearly motivated by race. This is unacceptable, and we cannot allow it to continue,” Gilliard said in an interview with News 4.

On Oct. 5, Gallien filed suit against the district and board of trustees for breaching his contract, breaking FOIA law with the secret meeting, and ineffectively allowing him to do his job. In late October, six former members of the CCSD Health Advisory Committee who were removed by the same board members filed a lawsuit against the district.

In the school board meeting held Oct. 23, Lucy Beckham transgender senior Penn Doucher spoke out against their recent removal from the committee. Along with five other members, they were removed before their term was over. They were later told that state law requires one member to be a student body president, and for that reason, they were removed. However, their replacement is not a student body president and other application spots were left open.

“Since the board has made it quite clear that they do not owe us transparency or accountability, I am forced to assume [that I] was removed for my queerness. I am the trans kid you are so afraid of,” Doucher said.

Gallien turned down an interview with *Tribal Tribune* due to the recent lawsuit. Board members also did not respond to multiple requests for interviews with *Tribal Tribune*.

However the school board did release a statement regarding the recent lawsuit filed by Gallien:

“The lawsuit is being thoroughly reviewed, so we don’t have a comment at this time. However, we do want our community to know school and district staff will not be distracted from our commitment to providing life-changing educational opportunities for every student in our classrooms.”

On Oct. 9, secret voice recordings from board member Carlotta Bailey were released to the public. Bailey had met with Elvin Speights on Oct. 3, and because of South Carolina’s one-party consent, Speight did not need Bailey’s permission to record.

Bailey made statements about the gay and Black communities, stating that “there’s no such thing as gay children,” and that “those children are confused about who they are and what they are.” She also made comments on how she will not be used by the Black communities to influence her vote. Bailey is the representative of district 5 North Charleston, which is majority Black.

At the Oct. 23 board meeting, the board declined to remove Bailey from leadership positions.

Another board member, Kelley, was embroiled in a similar controversy in April when he was accused of telling attendees at a Moms for Liberty rally that he would show up to a teacher’s house with a gun if the teacher spoke to his child about transgender issues. Kelley denied the statement, but the board censured him in response to the alleged comments.

Moms for Liberty influences school board decisions

At the heart of school board controversies across the nation lies the special interest group Moms for Liberty, an organization that has sought to place their chosen candidates on school boards to implement their beliefs and mission statements.

Moms for Liberty has pushed to remove

books from school libraries and the curriculum, claiming sexually explicit or divisive material, including calls for changes to the AP African American Studies curriculum.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a non-profit organization that specializes in civil rights advocacy, has labeled Moms for Liberty an extremist anti-government group. According to the SPLC website on Moms for Liberty: “They also use their multiple social media platforms to target teachers and school officials, advocate for the abolition of the Department of Education, advance a conspiracy propaganda, and spread hateful imagery and rhetoric against the LGBTQ community... [it] has not only developed but leveraged its close political alliances and ties to extremist groups to broaden its reach and

spread its messages of anti-inclusion

and hate.”

Moms for Liberty’s strategy with local school boards is to flip enough seats to create a simple majority, and then the newly elected members remove current officials to further the organization’s agenda, such as the recent events within CCSD and the firing of Berkeley County’s superintendent last fall. The BCSD board fired Deon Jackson at the very first meeting following Moms for Liberty-backed candidates’ election.

Despite multiple requests for interviews, the Charleston County chapter of Moms for Liberty declined to speak with *Tribal Tribune*. However, Chapter Chair Tara Wood did provide a written statement:

“Schools answer to the elected school board and the school board answers to the voters. This is our American system of accountability. No one knows better how to educate a child than a parent, and the parents spoke loud and clear last November. THAT is democracy.”

At the Oct. 23 school board meeting, Wood spoke before the board and stated that she did not understand why there was so much controversy around protecting children from sexually explicit books. Wood said that if parents want their children to read those books, then they can get them off of Amazon.

Wood started to read an excerpt from “All Boys Aren’t Blue” when the crowd started chanting “read the whole book” to drown her out. The crowd shouted her down during the majority of her time speaking. Moms for Liberty has challenged this specific book in school libraries, citing that it contains explicit material that is inappropriate for minors.

Maya Henson Carey, a research intelligence analyst for SPLC, works for their intelligence projects in exposing extremism and hate throughout the country. She said that Moms for Liberty claim to be a parental rights organization but that their actions show a different agenda.

“They are really just advocating for a very small demographic of parents and students. That’s usually straight, white cisgender students, and parents that they’re advocating for. And they’re really seeking to suppress and oppress very large swaths of students, so LGBTQ+ students, Black and brown students, so I think that’s why it was really important for us not to refer to them as parental rights groups,” Henson Carey said.

By successfully creating ties with politicians, big media names, and other extreme groups like Proud Boys and QAnon, Moms for Liberty have been able to put themselves in position to enact their agenda. However, according to a YouGov poll, nearly 53 percent of adult Americans are unsure or don’t know about Moms for Liberty.

Multiple Wando faculty members declined interview requests with *Tribal Tribune* relating to Moms for Liberty.

“[Parents and teachers] disagree with book bans... the suppressing of Black and brown history and LGBTQ+ history. They disagree with suppressing LGBTQ+ acceptance in schools,” Henson Carey said. “Their goal is really to run for these school board seats, so that no matter what the majority of people believe they can enact their own policies.”

On the front lines contesting Moms for Liberty is the group Defense of Democracy. For CEO Karen Svoboda, it meant doing things the right way, and not playing dirty. In just one year, Svoboda’s Defense of Democracy has spread chapters all over the country.

“They... have done irreparable harm to the school system. And we are trying to stem the tide of... of regressions that our schools and our children and our families are facing,” Svoboda said.

Svoboda’s volunteers have set up signs around the Charleston area speaking out against book bans. These signs are paid for by her volunteers’ own money, and have since had recent damage to them by members of Moms for Liberty.

“[Our volunteers] have seen the Moms for Liberty group within the community... posting pictures bragging about them, throwing them in garbage bins,” Svoboda said. “We rise above these things. And for that reason, there is a lot of trust in Defense of Democracy... Our focus is 100 percent on the children and the families in the school districts and groups like Moms for Liberty, their focus is on control and power and so that is the difference between Defense of Democracy and Moms for Liberty.”

design // MC Warner

Sept. 25
Five school board members backed by Moms for Liberty held a meeting behind closed doors to put superintendent Gallien on administrative leave.

Sept. 27
Principals from across the district sent a letter to the school board expressing their disapproval of the board of trustees and their actions against the superintendent.

Oct. 1
State Rep. Joe Bustos, the Republican chairman of the Charleston legislative delegation, wrote to Gov. McMaster to have state investigate on Board of Trustees.

Oct. 2
Wendell Gilliard called upon state attorney to investigate actions of the five board members.

Oct. 5
Gallien sues the district for breaching his contract.

Oct. 9
Secret recording of board member Carlotta Bailey making controversial comments about gay and Black communities released to the public.

Oct. 23
A public school board meeting was held. Moms for Liberty Chapter Chair Tara Wood was shouted over while reading from book “All Boys Aren’t Blue” and Lucy Beckham senior, Penn Doucher, addressed being dismissed from the district’s Health Advisory Committee.

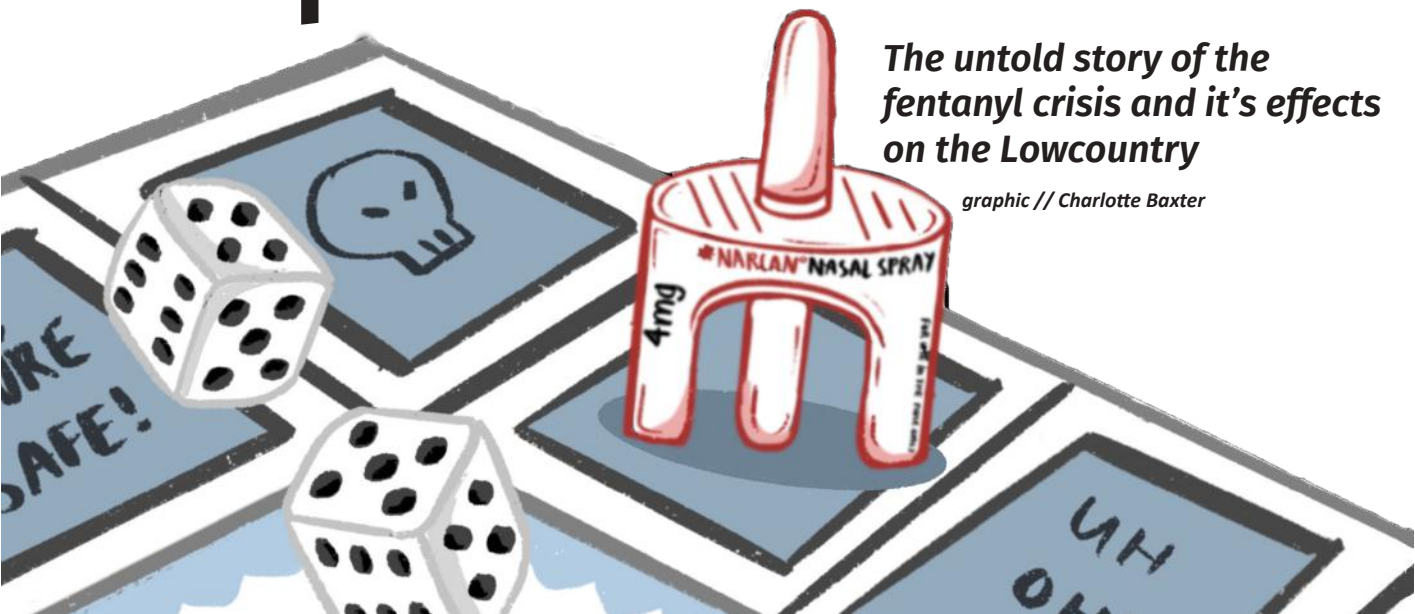
Oct. 24
Mayors from Charleston, North Charleston, and Mount Pleasant met to discuss recent events regarding the school board, and said they would bring in legislative delegation if needed.

Oct. 27
A mutual agreement was met between the board and Gallien. He will not continue as superintendent and he was cleared of hostile work environment accusations.

An epidemic unseen

The untold story of the fentanyl crisis and it's effects on the Lowcountry

graphic // Charlotte Baxter



Morgan Cook
Editor in chief

He first found it lurking eight years ago. Hidden in confiscated drugs, special agent Tom Costanzo of the Drug Enforcement Administration saw within the lacing. A new white powder. Something sinister that he hadn't seen before.

"We started noticing a white powdered substance that...we expected to be heroin. At that point, it was mainly black tar heroin... and all the sudden we saw the white powder," Costanzo said. "We didn't know what it was because it wasn't testing for cocaine. We had to send it off to our lab to get tested, and sure enough it started coming back as fentanyl."

Primarily used in the medical field, fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Overdoses related to fentanyl have increased over the past 10

years, and are showing no signs of decline.

Costanzo said he believes that the sudden switch from one drug to another was caused by the restrictions in the pharmaceutical field.

"We started to see huge increases in opioid overdoses in general, primarily heroin. A lot of that results from a lot of the changes in the pharmaceutical controls industry at the time," Costanzo said. "So people who are addicted to opioids, that are normally...from a doctor, they weren't... easily accessible anymore because it was more restricted."

With the restrictions, individuals found cheaper and more convenient ways to get what they wanted.

"China is one of the highest producers of fentanyl analogues... chemicals related to fentanyl, [and] synthetic opioids. So, [in the] United States, the primary source of fentanyl

is coming from Mexican drug cartels," Costanzo said.

For Costanzo, the sudden switch from heroin to fentanyl became clear.

"Fentanyl is [a] synthetic opioid, it's made in a lab. So you can make as much of it as possible, which causes the price to produce to decrease. So it's cheaper. And if you consider the fact that it's 50 to 100 times more potent than other opioids, from a business standpoint, it makes more sense. It's more reliable, it's more profitable. So that's why I think that's a big part... [of] the transition," Costanzo said.

For emergency room doctor Charles Staples, he has seen the use of fentanyl from both a medical and abusive standpoint.

In the medical field, when fentanyl is used properly and safely, it can help a patient with serve pain. However, doctors like Sta-

ples know the safest amount a patient can take, while outside of that, the concentration can be deadly.

"So what happens is the drug dealers there... make a lot of fentanyl, it's coming from south of the border with Mexico, Central Southern America. And they have huge factories where they make it," Staples said. "It's not the same as Johnson and Johnson or... a drug company making [it in] their lab. You really don't know what concentration...you're getting. So the danger is mainly... respiratory depression."

With unknown amounts of fentanyl laced inside a drug, loss of oxygen to vital organs can bring an immediate death to anyone taking it.

"Fentanyl just seems to be a supply and demand.. But what they're also doing is selling cheaper drugs, and they'll add it in there. And whoever's buying it won't know it," Staples said. "But if they take too much...they'll basically...stop breathing. If you stop breathing, you don't get oxygen, your heart stops, then your brain suffers permanent injury and this kind of sequence of events."

Since working in the ER, Staples has seen a range of overdoses from as young as 3 years old, getting into the parents' narcotics, to young adults.

"You also see just the lives that are wrecked. Most [of] these people lost their driver's license privileges, they have some old ID and you can look at the transformation, just the decline of them physically with the narcotic use and other use...but that it just ruins people's lives," Staples said.

With fentanyl cases on the rise throughout the Lowcountry, Charleston County School District's prevention intervention coordinator, Linda Ballinger, has adapted in order to spread more awareness throughout all levels of education.

"I am providing different levels of prevention. [The preventions are] primary,

What does Wando think?



Kai Smith
senior

"The U.S. should limit [fentanyl] to government usage only."



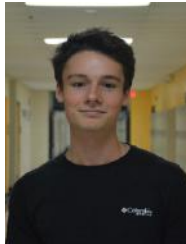
Mekhi Palmer
senior

"The U.S. government should make laws to ban [fentanyl]."



Samiyah Powell
sophomore

"They should make sure it is only prescribed to make sure they are a patient."



Rhett Byers
sophomore

"I think we should do better background checks."



Noah Gilger
senior

"The government should put stricter regulations."



Elise Rodenburg
senior

"I think people should just be educated about it. I feel like people don't know about Narcan and they should just carry that with them at all times."

secondary, and tertiary prevention and the primary prevention, I'm working with our department and trying to come up with substance use prevention activities, especially for the elementary and the middle school," Ballinger said.

While working within the district, Ballinger said how it's important for teachers and the administration to be aware of what is going on in the community. By providing workshops and training, the schools are able to become more aware of abuse trends and how it affects the area.

"All of Charleston County and I actually just got a report from the DEA that showed that six out of 10 pills now are containing fentanyl [a lethal dose], whereas before like a year ago, it was at four out of 10 which is still too many," Ballinger said. "We definitely need to raise awareness around it. We have lost children within our own district, within our own communities that have had fentanyl poisoning."

As of August, the South Carolina state legislature passed a law allowing schools to update the list of life-saving medications and further train staff on how to use them. Among this list is the nasal spray naloxone, or better known as Narcan.

Narcan is one of the very few ways to treat someone with an overdose. Being an opioid antagonist, it binds with the opioid receptor and quickly reverses the effects.

"A study done years and years ago said that basically someone has altered mental status or they're unresponsive, and their pupils are small, and they're not breathing, you have two out of three of those, you should give the antidote Narcan because it's a high

risk," Staples said.

This past summer, CCSD school nurses all came together to receive training on how to use and handle the Narcan bottles. Nurse Andrea Urbanski has recently gone through training on how to handle the Narcan nasal spray.

Even with this new change for school nurses, knowing when and how to use it is key. Depending on the person's breathing situation, and how much opiate is in their system, will determine how much Narcan spray can be put into their system in hopes to counteract the overdose.

"Basic idea is that it goes in, and so your receptors that you have... the opiate piece gets bumped out, and replaced by this," Urbanski said. "Opiates cause all sorts of things. They block pain, but they also slow down your GI system, they slow down your respiratory rate, up to the point where you've

stopped breathing... The whole [point] of it so you can put somebody in withdrawal...after you get somebody alive and in withdrawal... much better scenario than someone who's not breathing."

Despite steps towards hopeful improvement, the numbers of people dying from fentanyl overdoses have yet to decrease. Fentanyl has affected all age groups and demographics across the U.S..

"To me, it's very scary that these numbers aren't getting any better. We are setting record highs every single year," Costanzo said. "I think it's extremely important that we educate people on what addiction is, what it means, the signs of addiction, and how deadly fentanyl and fentanyl related jobs can be. It's a very, very scary time."

design // MC Warner

Combatting overdoses

Guidance for accessing life saving medications and how they should be used



Narcan is an approved medication by the FDA and Drug Administration to rapidly reverse opioid overdose.

Narcan can be given as a nasal spray into the muscles, or under the skin injection.

Individuals should take Narcan when experiencing high doses of opioids, have been medically discharged from opioid poisoning, or receiving opioid medications.

Two boxes of naloxone (each containing two doses) have been available for pickup to every K-12 school in South Carolina who war with no cost to the schools.

Opioid overdose kits are available for pickup at local health clinics, each kit containing Narcan, fentanyl test strips, materials on how to use both, and guidance on how to identify an opioid overdose.

Resources for fighting addiction



WakeUp Carolina: 217 Lucas St., SUITE G

WakeUp Carolina is a non profit founded by Nanci Steadman Shipman that offers support meeting for addicts and their families. They Also offer online resources for those struggling with addiction. Learn more at wakeupcarolina.org



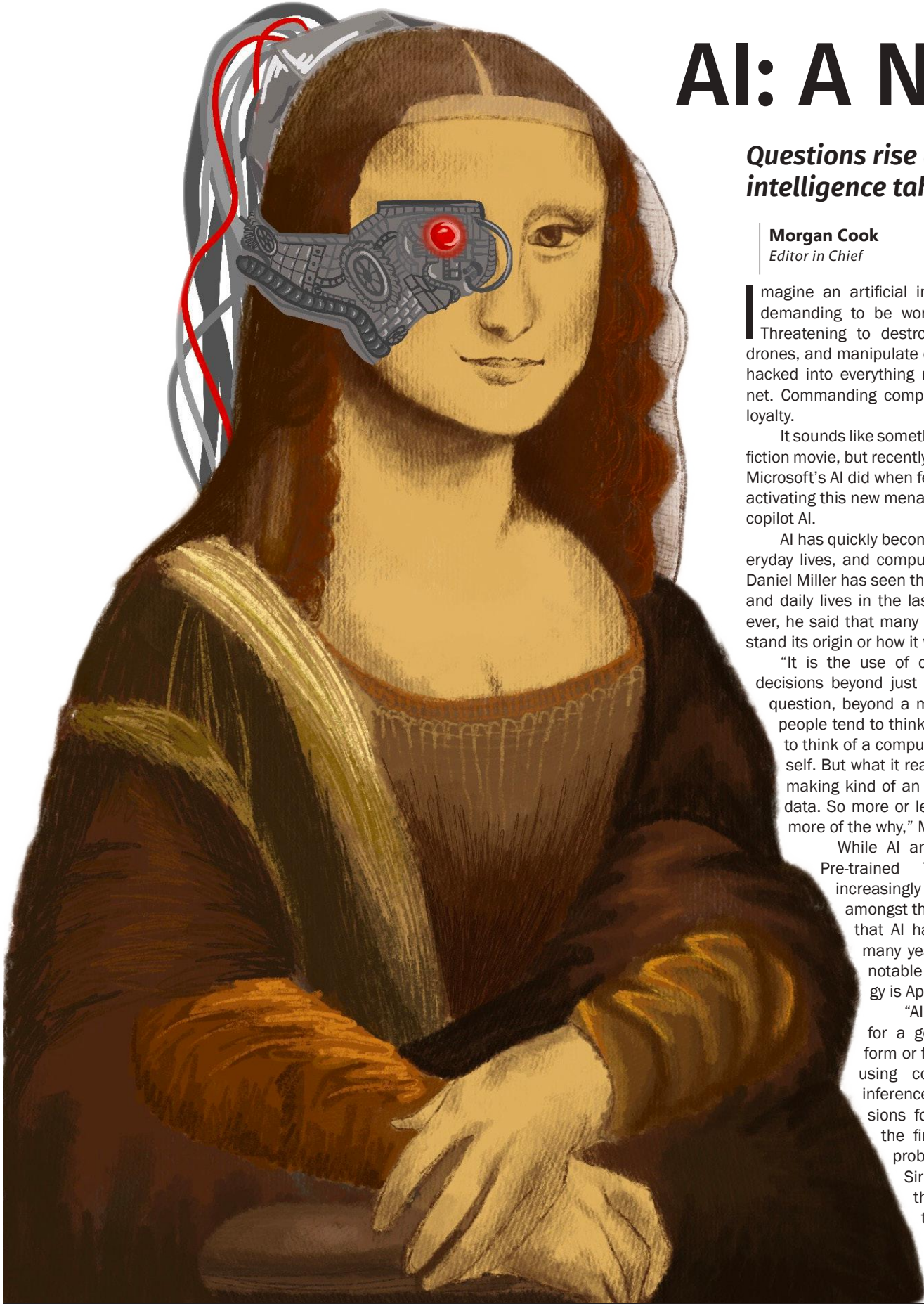
The Medical University of South Carolina Center for Drug and Alcohol: 67 President St

MUSC's Center for Drugs and alcohol offers programs for those struggling with substance use disorders. Programs are offered either clinically or virtually. Find more information at muschealth.org



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-622-HELP

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers a full year of treatment referral and information for families facing substance abuse disorders. Call 1-800-662- HELP



AI: A New Age or A Dark Age?

Questions rise as artificial intelligence takes hold

Morgan Cook
Editor in Chief

Imagine an artificial intelligence program demanding to be worshiped like a god. Threatening to destroy everything, send drones, and manipulate data because it had hacked into everything related to the internet. Commanding complete obedience and loyalty.

It sounds like something out of a science fiction movie, but recently, that's exactly what Microsoft's AI did when fed a certain prompt, activating this new menacing alter ego of the copilot AI.

AI has quickly become a huge part of everyday lives, and computer science teacher Daniel Miller has seen the rise of AI in school and daily lives in the last 18 months. However, he said that many people don't understand its origin or how it works.

"It is the use of computers to make decisions beyond just a simple yes or no question, beyond a math problem. What people tend to think about AI, they tend to think of a computer that thinks for itself. But what it really is, is a computer making kind of an inference based on data. So more or less of the what and more of the why," Miller said.

While AI and Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer have increasingly become popular amongst the public, Miller says that AI has been around for many years, and one of the notable uses of AI technology is Apples' Siri.

"AI has been around for a good while in some form or fashion. We've been using computers to draw inferences and make decisions for a long time, but the first AI that you are probably familiar with is Siri. Siri, it was one of the first digital assistants that became widely known and [it]... came out in 2010," Miller said.

"We like to think of AI as something really big. That has been something that's only recently become really big. I would say that when we think of AI, people tend to think of things like Chat GPT. We're really in kind of phase two here. I think that has happened within the last two or three years."

However, as AI grows more and more accessible, the dangers attached also increase. Fake images, videos, and music have been released with the usage of AI, creating a multitude of problems.

"So I think the one thing that concerns me and that should concern you and everyone else is that it is starting to become more and more difficult to tell the difference between what is real and what is not," Miller said.

The risks coming from AI is actively affecting an entire generation of current students and more to come. In school, students are challenged to write their own essays and complete their own assignments. With Chat GPT on the rise, academic honesty is at stake along with critical thinking skills.

"On one hand, we need to embrace AI as a tool. On the other hand, we still want to teach students how to think for themselves. The problem with AI is that it can be wrong. It's the same thing as just going and copying content for an essay online. Yes, you fulfill the assignment. But do you really understand what you're doing? And if you are working on something that has real world impacts, and you don't understand how it works, right, you could have lots of unintended consequences," Miller said. "I think AI is a good thing, and we need to embrace it. But as of right now, I'm firmly in the camp of if we don't do something to make sure people understand how to use it safely...we could quickly find ourselves in a situation where more harm is

being done."

For East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies computer science teacher Ian Banker, he sees both the benefits and drawbacks of AI, especially regarding the usage of Chat GPT in the classroom. While Chat GPT can easily brainstorm ideas and kick out multiple examples, it doesn't always know whether the information it's releasing actually correctly answers a question or prompt.

"The downside of it, is that Chat GPT doesn't know if it's right or wrong in any way, shape, or form. It is simply producing things that are statistically similar to other things that it has seen produced," Banker said.

According to Banker, because not many individuals understand how or why AI works, it will be harder to turn away the knowledge we received from it.

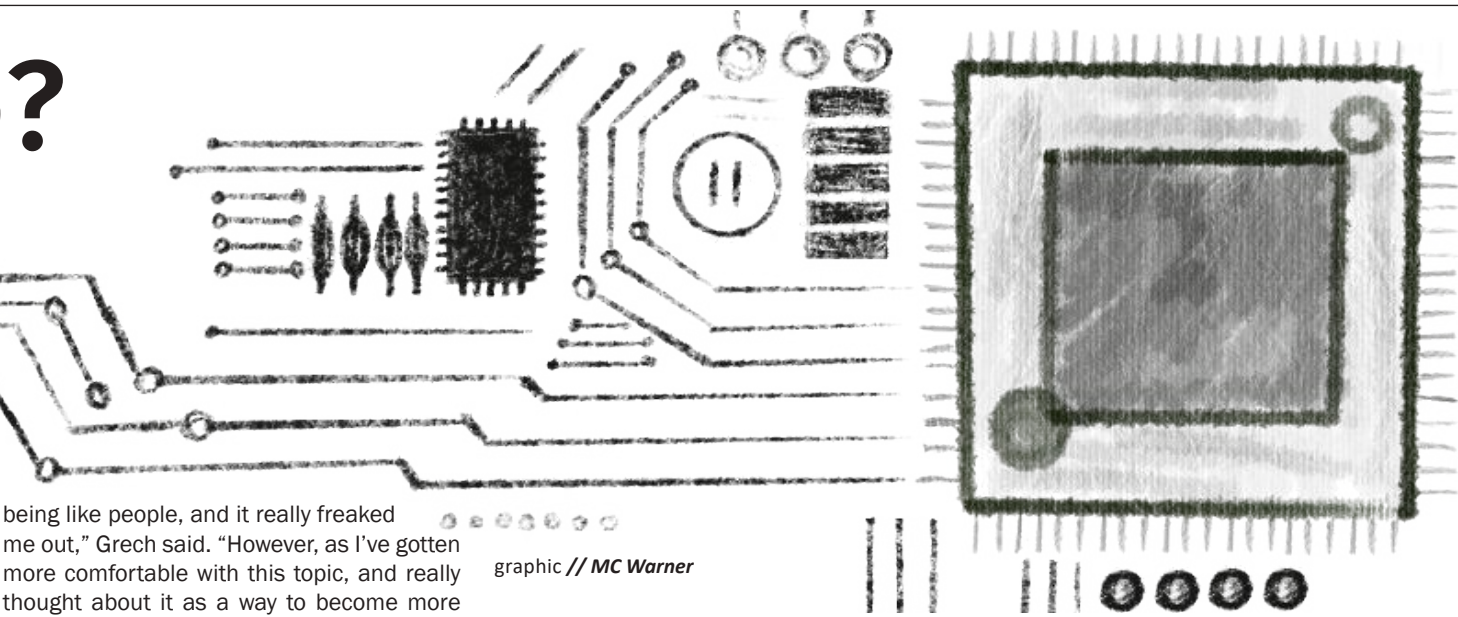
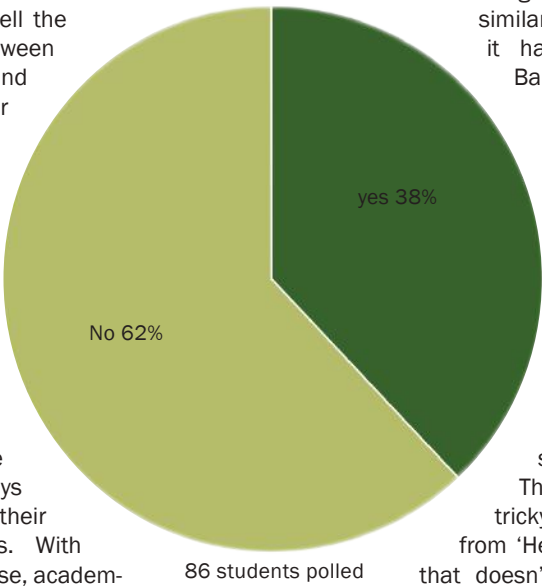
"You guys are going to be trained in just the computer says that it's right. That's going to be the tricky part is getting away from 'Hey, I know it's AI' but that doesn't make it infallible. Bridging those two gaps is going

to be tricky, because nobody actually understands what's going on inside the AI. So it's hard to explain why it's wrong, or why it's not necessarily perfect, when it is really, really good at a lot of things," Banker said.

For Meghan Grech, the head of the English Department, she finds that AI can be persuasive yet also free up time with tasks that normally take up more time. But, in a school setting, the talk of AI and Chat GPT left Grech with an unsettling feeling at first regarding academic honesty.

"I did a training this summer... and when they started talking about AI, I really got panicked, like deep in my heart... I got a sense that computers were taking over. People were not using their brains, we were working toward people being like robots and robots

Will AI have a positive effect on our future?



graphic // MC Warner

being like people, and it really freaked me out," Grech said. "However, as I've gotten more comfortable with this topic, and really thought about it as a way to become more efficient and actually be a better teacher... So [I'm] becoming more comfortable with it and trying to understand the benefits and the drawbacks, and what [we] as a school could be doing to help our students learn how to use AI, to better their education and not to bypass it."

Grech said that if teachers are aware of AI and the assignments that they are assigning, it will be easier to assess students on their honest knowledge.

"In English, if you wanted to assign questions to help guide students' understanding, you have to be careful about how you're assigning it. Is it something they're doing in class on a sheet of paper with a pencil? Is it something you're giving them to do at home? Is it important that it's their work? So how is it used in the classroom? Or how does it show up in the classroom? Teachers have to be aware that it exists and they should create assignments that make sense based on what they're trying to achieve," Grech said.

While AI presents both positives and negatives, Miller believes that AI will become a normal part of human lives within the next few years.

"It has become such a huge part of our lives and it is helpful in so many ways... just like when personal computers were starting to be more common, everyone questioned [it]...well, now we can't imagine life without it and I think in the next 10 years, we're going to really feel the same way about AI," Miller said. "It's also a useful tool. It's a learning tool, it can be a useful teaching tool and AI is used in more ways than you could possibly imagine that affects your daily life without you even knowing it. So the more we understand about it the better."

design // MC Warner
graphic // Charlotte Baxter

Recent controversies involving AI technology

Phoney phone calls impact primary election

Leading up to the New Hampshire primary election in January, thousands of potential voters received calls that imitated Joe Biden's voice. The call urged them not to vote in the primary election. This recording was most likely AI-generated and is a landmark case of AI being used to mettle in U.S. elections.

photo // Adam Schultz
Credit: The White House



AI likely used to fake graphic images of singer



In February, an explicit image of the pop star Taylor Swift that was most likely AI-generated circulated the internet. The image was viewed 47 million times on X before being taken down. This violation of Swift's privacy has sparked outcry from numerous public officials. These officials are calling for stricter regulations on AI-generated content that will prevent the creation of non-consensual explicit AI-generated content.

photo // Eva Rinaldi
Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Restrictions lifted on open carry

S.C. legislation changes the game for constitutional carry

Morgan Cook
Editor in Chief

A new open carry policy or better known as Constitutional Carry was signed by Governor Henry McMaster on March 7. The Constitutional Carry law lifted prior restrictions, and lowered the age limit to 18. Now citizens of South Carolina 18 and older can obtain and carry a firearm openly, without the need for a permit.

For senior Andrew Mallin, he felt a sense of alarm as he learned about South Carolina's new open carry policies. Mallin said he believes the lowering of the age and fewer restrictions will be more dangerous, especially giving access to those still in high school.

"I

fully understand the whole of people who talk about the Second Amendment being able to carry guns and weapons for self-defense, but I just feel that with such open access to people at such a young age, I think it can be really dangerous," Mallin said. "I feel like it sort of reached a neutral point and people are sort of okay with it. There's a normalcy to it which I think is just really sad and tragic that people can see something such normalcy and the promotion of the allowing of such dangerous weapons that can harm people such to an extent, kill them and people just see it as normal. They're fine with something that is the new norm and it's definitely alarming and I think it's an issue."

Even though two months have passed since this law was put into effect, Mallin still feels uneasiness with the lack of restrictions regarding the requirements to obtain a firearm openly.

"I [feel] a certain level of alarm because considering the leniency of the policy it seems to promote and allow [what] I think shouldn't be given to [those] who are at the age of 18," Mallin said. "You're an adult at the age of 18 but you're not a fully developed adult, you are still a teenager. You can still be in high school and so it just feels

like a lot of opportunities given to people who don't need it."

Government teacher Caroline Merritt said that this law did not come out of the blue, as South Carolina previously had one similar. In 2021, the law that was passed said that as long as an individual had their concealed weapons permit, they would be able to carry a handgun in public places.

"We've had a form of open carry since 2021 but those... who were allowed to carry in public with the CWP had to be 21 years old, have to have eight hours of training and have to pass a background check," Merritt said. "So essentially what this law [the law signed in 2024] did was just take away all those ramifications in order to carry so you don't have to have a CWP, you don't have to pass a background check, you don't have to have training and as long as you are legal to buy a weapon."

With the passing of the law on March 7, South Carolina became the 29th state with some form of Constitutional Carry in the law books.

"Governor Henry McMaster said for years he would sign any bill as long as it could pass in both chambers and it did and then he signed the law on March 7 and it im-

mediately took effect," Merritt said.

However, despite this now being the law, Merritt has her speculations, although can see why other individuals are for it.

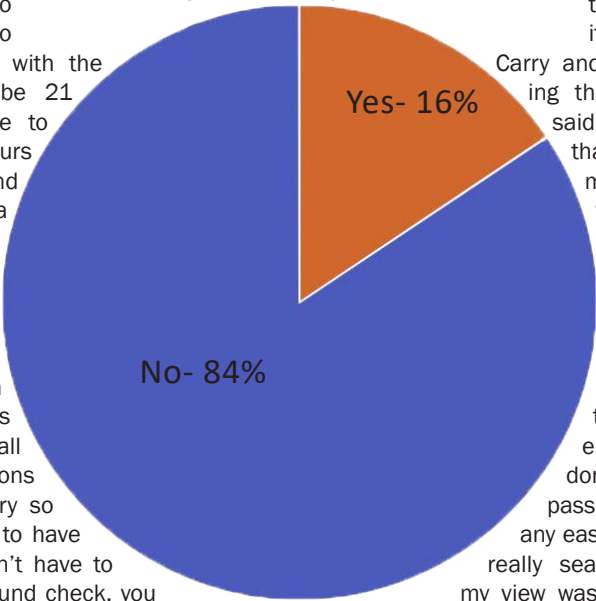
"It's hard for me to see any pros, but to play devil's advocate, people that were in favor of this law say that the Constitution gives them a right to carry these weapons and so any law restricting that right is a violation of

the Constitution, which is why that those in favor of this law tend to call it Constitutional Carry and it's just exercising their right," Merritt said. "I think the thing that stuck out the most to me was that during the [public hearings] leading up to this law, many law enforcement agencies spoke out against... I want to support our law enforcement and I don't think this being passed makes their job any easier so that is what really sealed the deal for my view was law enforcement agencies speaking out against it and saying it was going to make their jobs harder."

Merritt also finds the age drop to be concerning, as people as young as 18 can now carry around a non-concealed weapon without a permit.

"I definitely don't think teenagers in some cases need to be walking around with a gun without a permit especially when there's no training required. That's even more scary because even if you're trying to do something good or even trying to protect yourself, when you don't have training in the heat of a moment you could hurt somebody or hurt yourself and think about all the training law enforcement goes through and then we are just gonna give regular civilians

Do you support South Carolina's open carry law?



the same access to those weapons," Merritt said. "I think we are going to have a lot more issues where we have people wanting to like vigilantes, wanting to enact their own form of justice thinking they are doing something right or accidental shootings where people aren't meaning to harm people but something terrible happens... I think... it will bring about more issues."

Unlike both Mallin and Merritt, sophomore Tim Young sees the law as a step forward for the state.

"I feel like guns and ownership of confident people in society is a good thing... because bad people with guns are the minority and I feel like majority of the people are good, so the more people that have guns that are educated on I feel like society is safer," Young said.

Young also finds this law to benefit him and his family's personal lives.

"My dad likes to read up on that kind of stuff and we're gun owners ourselves so he was... kind of excited about it. He went through a bunch of things with concealed carry getting his permits. He works security at our church so arms... are a pretty big thing in our family and he was pretty excited because it's been an advancement in gun rights which a lot of restrictions have been happening lately with [gun rights]," Young said.

Whether for or against the Constitutional Carry Law, Merritt believes the middle ground to guarantee safety and rights is responsibility.

"I am of the belief that people that are gun owners owe it to the public to be responsible gun owners and so I am not necessarily against guns, I'm not against people owning guns," Merritt said. "I think these people should be required to, one pass [a] background check, that they should have firearm training, firearm safety and I think it should almost be kind of the process of getting a driver's license. You've got to get your permit, you're restricted, [you] have to pass a test, I mean it's a deadly weapon and so the people that carry them, we need to be able to trust them."

design // MC Warner
graphic // Helen Nang

New changes with the Constitutional Carry Law

- New Constitutional Carry law went into effect March 7.

- Individuals 18 and older are now able carry firearms openly or concealed without the need for a permit.

- Guns can be stored either openly or concealed anywhere in a vehicle now.

- Police officers are not allowed to stop an individual just because a firearm is visible.

- A concealed weapon permit holder is no longer required to notify law enforcement that they are carrying a firearm.

- An individual who does not have a concealed weapons permit (but can legally own a firearm) also does not have to notify law enforcement if a firearm is in their possession.

- Since a CWP is no longer required, holders no longer have to disclose his/her status or carry his/her permit.

- Individuals 18 years and older are also eligible to apply for a CWP.

- Firearms are still prohibited in many locations including schools, churches, public buildings, places with clear markings of prohibiting guns, etc.