

My name is Justin from the 6th District. As a police officer in this great state, I feel I'm uniquely qualified to tell you all: you're targeting the wrong people.

When we catch a perp with a gun, we're not asking for their carry permit because they don't have one. When a student slips a gun into their backpack, they're not wondering whether they're too close to a school. Whatever effect you think these new laws might have, it's safe to say the ones now aren't doing much.

Those you target aren't the criminals. They're your bus driver. Your mailman. Your cashier. Your bank teller. Your teacher. Your friends. Your neighbors. I can't always say they're in a line of work that lets them carry. But I've seen them out there. And when I do I don't hassle them for their papers or break out a measuring tape. Instead I shake their hand and say "Thank you," because they're out there doing the job we can't.

What do I mean? It's no secret. Police are stretched thin. I've heard countless stories and myself have regularly witnessed times where calls for service aren't responded to until hours after they're made. There's nothing more shameful than responding to a call just to have the caller say "That was hours ago! Where were you?" The truth is we're so short-staffed that your call had to hold. Police in this state, through no fault of their own, have had to hold everything from alarms and assaults all the way to car thefts and burglaries on a regular basis.

Even in the most dire calls, it's minutes before police arrive. That leaves callers staring down active robbers and attackers while they wait for help. And despite that priority response, we still might not be fast enough to prevent harm or even catch the suspect. In situations like these, it's civilians who are forced to act. And when they act they ought to do so with every advantage at their disposal. Because their safety shouldn't be at the whims of politicians looking to put another feather in their cap. I dare any of you to tell your neighbor or God forbid your child that they'll be jailed for defending themselves because they didn't ask the gas station they stopped at whether they were allowed to carry (as if that's a question people are just expected to ask).

I leave you with this final point: On July 17, 2022, there was a mass shooting at a mall in Greenwood, Indiana. Three were killed by the shooter until 22-year old Elisjscha Dicken shot and killed the shooter. Elisjscha was not military or police, just an armed bystander. Ironically, the mall prohibited guns on its premises. That didn't seem to stop the shooter, but thankfully not Elisjscha either. Notably, Elisjscha took out the shooter with 10 shots from 40 yards. I can say with complete confidence that most cops would miss all 10 of those shots on their best day.

All this to say: good luck getting the police exactly when you need them. And good luck finding police who are going to arrest their friends and neighbors whose only crime was following the law just to have it flipped on them when they needed it the most. I'm sure that will be a popular policy that won't backfire at all.