



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 27, 2019

Petition to End Virginia Beach “Gun-free Zone” Policy: More Than 3,000 Signers So Far

Three years ago, Vincent Smith, a city engineer in Virginia Beach, Virginia, saw a gap in the security measures protecting city employees: “The gap was not allowing employees to carry a firearm,” he said. “Instead, people were forced — like I am every day — to choose between earning a living and saving my life.”

So he created a petition demanding that the city council reverse its “gun-free zone” policies. He got 259 signers, and it went nowhere.



Now, he has tried again. He refreshed the [petition on Change.org](#):

We the people of the United States have the right to bear arms to protect our liberties, freedoms, and our very lives. This right is protected by the 2nd Amendment of our Constitution. Unfortunately, employees of The City of Virginia Beach (herein after The City) are not afforded these rights while engaged in such employment despite no restrictions on the general public possessing weapons while present in City buildings, properties or work sites nor while interacting with City employees.

In the wake of recent tragic events [i.e., the May 31 shooting at the city’s Municipal Center that took 12 lives], it has become abundantly apparent that this employee weapons possession ban must end....

We, the undersigned, call on the Virginia Beach City Council, City Manager and Mayor to amend The City’s employee weapons ban (City HR Policy 6.18) and give personnel who are properly licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia to carry a concealed handgun the ability to do so to protect their lives.

Smith’s initial goal was 2,500 signers. As this story was being written, the number of signers was 3,235. His goal is now 5,000.

Said Smith: “I want a real consideration by council and a real discussion about changing the HR policy. The city has to [have] something that doesn’t forbid employees [from possessing] weapons ... something that includes an allowance for them to take personal responsibility for their own safety.” He added, “What happened [on May 31] could have been minimized.”

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John Lott agrees. In a Fox News op-ed last week, Lott, the founder and president of the Crime Prevention Research Center, wrote: “This attack could have ended with much less bloodshed.... However, the city bans individuals, including public employees, from possessing ‘any weapon’ on city property.”



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In fact, if his recent study of school shootings since 2000 can be applied to municipal office buildings as well, there wouldn't have been any bloodshed at all. In that study, reviewed last month by *The New American*, Lott examined every school shooting from 2000 through 2018 and discovered that not a single school "that allows teachers to carry has experienced a death or injury from a shooting."

This coincides with his broader studies, in which he discovered that 98 percent of all public shootings in the United States since 1950 have occurred in places where the average citizen was banned from possessing a firearm.

That's why Lott is pushing for passage of Representative Thomas Massie's (R-Ky.) Safe Students Act, which would repeal the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 signed into law by then-President George H.W. Bush. Lott explained that repeal "would make it easier for state and local governments to unambiguously set their own firearm policies by eliminating the 'one-size-fits-all' federal ban on guns in school zones."

This is a lesson that the Virginia Beach city council is about to learn once Smith's petition reaches 5,000 signatures. By reversing its ban, the council could, at a single stroke, turn the city's most dangerous places to work into one of the safest places to work.

It is said that when politicians "feel the heat, they see the light." Virginia Beach's city council members are about to feel the heat, thanks to the petition posted by city employee Vincent Smith that continues to gain momentum.

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American, writing primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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