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Rogierian Argument: Detecting Danger

When I first stepped foot into Skyline High School as a freshman back in the summer of 2014, my primary step was to take off my backpack, put it on a table, and unzip all compartments for everyone to see while I walked through a large frame that would beep if I had something on me. At every single main entrance of the school, there is a metal detector, along with a security monitor to take a good look at everyone's bags and make sure we don't have anything menacing. However, Skyline High School isn't the only one with these high security and protocols. Thousands of educational establishments all across the country have begun an excessively guarded procedure in order to protect students and staff. There's been an uproar about putting more protection in academic buildings due to the recent upheaval of students who try to cause drastic harm to people: in clearer terms, school shooters. These school shooters have no remorse for what they do and can be any student-- even if they are the calmest and quietest kid someone's ever known. Anyone is capable of anything these days, so security is very much needed. Although this is true, just how much security is needed? A majority of people say that there should be only a few—but still very strong—security checks with metal detectors and monitors to avoid traffic and unneeded tardiness. However, I believe metal detectors at every entrance of an institution is a major benefit for our safety and makes the hassle worth it.

[OPPOSITION'S POSITION] Those who oppose having large amounts of security are against it for ethical and perfectly understandable reasons, some of which I have definitely

experienced. For one instance, there is the one rule monitors can't help but break, which is invasion of privacy. When the monitors search through individuals' bags, they will look at everything—I've had the awkward experience of having a grown man looking through all of my female sanitary products. It's a bit of an embarrassing feeling to have personal possessions examined. In addition, if they spot any sort of snack or drink (sometimes even a water bottle), it will be taken up. I've seen plenty of times a student's candy bar or Gatorade bottle he or she were planning to eat at lunch put to the side—and that student won't get it back.

On another note, one of the biggest reasons why people are against metal detectors in general is because of how much time it takes to inspect each and every body's bags. This time-consuming process is sure to make everyone who's waiting their turn in line to be late to their class. The process of seeking through the compartments of all backpacks and purses is extremely tedious, so by the time they're finished with one student, four more are waiting impatiently so they can rush to their morning courses. What's more, if students forgot to place their phone on the side when they walked through the detector, it would beep, and these students would have to empty their pockets and go back through until it stopped. This annoyed everyone who was in line, and a lot of the time the source of the beeping was because of a metal belt buckle. This has happened to me plenty of times, and one awful thing I've experienced at my school is that when I would arrive even one minute after the bell rang, they'd make me stop and go all the way around the building to either get a tardy pass or find another entrance.

Lastly, one major negative effect of metal detectors in institutions is that a good number of students and staff believe that having so much security protocol makes the school look much more dangerous. Many people argue that a school that has tremendous amounts of security officials, surveillance, and highly guarded entryways come off as extremely violent, and if

anything, it makes the school look more prone to being attacked. **[TRANSITION TO YOUR POSITION]** All this aside though, as much as it infuriated me to wait in such long lines and made me complain and groan, I always looked at the much bigger picture, even if the pessimistic thoughts of being prone to be attacked in the middle of the day were in the back of my mind.

For example, one thing always stuck with me after I'd arrive to class five minutes after the bell with a big "T" (for "Tardy") next to my name, and it's that -- as annoying as it is to be late to class and have food and/or certain belongings taken away -- we are being kept safe by the use of so many metal detectors. Any sort of pocketknife, razor blade, sharp tool, or most importantly a gun can be easily found with the many metal detectors that can be used to catch it. So many people in the past few years have made threats over social media to their schools and colleges, claiming that they are going to come into the school with a gun and have the intent of killing many people. This can be stopped from the start; with the use of metal detectors, no gun will even be allowed on or near the campus, and other safety obligations can prevent anything from even taking place. When I went to Skyline, no incident ever occurred where somebody had a gun or a lethal weapon on the school's property. My brother attended Skyline High School as well, and he explained to me that "nothing ever happened. With so many metal detectors around, it made me feel a lot better about being at school because a weapon couldn't be brought in. If anything, the schools who have the 'it won't happen here' attitude should rethink their choices" (Rodriguez). A few things happened here and there, and we had to be put on lockdown, but none of these included someone with a fully loaded gun or a razor-sharp knife who was determined to injure us all. The monitors would make sure that no one had anything of the sort in their bags, and that anyone who entered the building must go through a detector. With the thought of this, it

made me realize that it's a lot safer and comforting to have plenty of metal detectors with responsible monitors, and it makes the whole struggle of being late to class worth it.

[BENEFITS OF YOUR POSITION] The one major benefit we can all agree on about having a great quantity of metal detectors is that it keeps us safe. On the contrary, though, we cannot forget that metal detectors do not eliminate the fact that someone can try to come in with a weapon in their bag. However, according to a study conducted by two scientists surveying normal high school students in New York City, "students in schools with metal detectors were half as likely to report carrying a weapon to or from school as students in schools without metal detectors" (McCord et al. 11). It is definitely possible that anyone can come in with something unexpected, but having so much security makes it extremely difficult for a noxious intruder to sneak in. With this, they probably will not try to progress their awful plans any further. Having one or two detectors on the vast academic grounds is showing care to the protection of students, but having an abundant amount shows that they are being as careful as possible. It makes students feel much more comfortable and less uneasy being at school and knowing that it's nearly impossible for an infiltrator to come in and take their lives in just a few short moments.

Another benefit of having so many metal detectors around is that it's bringing the idea of educational protection into light. Seeing so many of these detecting machines shows that there is a threat to children's assurance, and that danger is a much more common problem in this day and age. When this threat is seen much more often, people decide to start getting up and acting, and many "schools are becoming more aware of the dangers and are taking more precautionary measures" ("Guns and Violence"). These new levels of high security in institutions has even encouraged normal students and parents all across the states to create "S.A.S.S.", or "Students Against School Shootings" ("Guns and Violence"), which can be a great help to create new ideas

on how to deal with safety in schools other than just metal detectors. Not only does S.A.S.S. bring awareness to the problem, but it can be used to help raise funds (by doing fundraisers) to aid for more preservations at the schools.

Next, another good benefit is that the detectors are very useful when it comes to people who bring a weapon in. This ties into what I mentioned previously, which was that any sort of armament can be found and the individual who brought it in can be taken into custody quickly. People can hide the strangest things in the strangest places, so it's better to be safe than sorry. Now the problem with food being seized is a different story, but there is a way to prevent guards from taking food: student should just put it in a lunch bag/ lunchbox. That way, security knows that it is food that one plans on eating for lunch instead of snacking in places where they shouldn't. The food rule is a tough order that has little to no loopholes, but they know that food brought in a lunch box is meant for someone to eat when it's the right time to.

Lastly, a major benefit is a better school climate. It gives students and staff a positive thought to fall back on, as long as there are abundant—but not overloaded—amounts of security in their schools. **[COMPROMISE OFFER TO OPPOSITION]:** Now, metal detectors cannot eliminate violence itself, and that's a fact. Violence will always be here, but there is a chance to lessen it and make the academic atmosphere a lot less scary, and that is this: creating several mental health service options available to students. Most school shooters have underlying dangerous emotions that go unseen, but these emotions end up bursting out once they take their horrid plans into actions and cause deadly harm. This can be addressed from the very start if there is someone this student can talk to or at least get help from, and it poses as a great compromise. An article written just this past month states “There are multiple approaches that are able to positively impact the school climate. Utilizing trauma-informed education, positive

behavior interventions and supports, restorative discipline, and social and emotional learning improves well-being at schools and benefits all students” (Hoffman). These support groups and educational awareness can be used to make normal everyday students and students who had to deal with the emotional trauma of actually experiencing a school shooting situation before feel much safer and secure at school, so they don’t feel safer physically from the metal detectors, but also mentally from the support and care from the school.

Therefore, metal detectors can be very prolonged and irksome, but it’s doing us all a favor by securing our establishments. Life will always have moments that are dull and aggravating, but in the end, it’s doing the most good with the least harm. Metal detectors are one security rule that does so much for students and staff that goes by unnoticed due to its bothersome effects. I hope the next time you go through a metal detector, try not to get too upset by the fact that you’re a little late for class, and instead remember just how much it’s protecting you and your life!

Works Cited

Guns and Violence – What Is Becoming of Our Schools?” *Students against School Shootings*,

Grand Valley State University, <http://www2.gvsu.edu/alvestek/proscons.htm>

Summarize: The purpose of this collection of web pages is to list the “pros” and “cons” of schools enforcing strict security. It lists both the positive impacts, such as a securer environment and more awareness, as well as the negative impacts, like violence being undeterred and some students still being scared to go to school.

Assess: This source was written by a student at Grand Valley State University, possibly for a project, and at the end of the collection, it cites several sources that were used to gather information.

Reflect: This web page supported my argument that schools are becoming much more aware of the threats and dangers that can enter their facilities, so they are taking more action to prevent student’s from feeling so unsafe. This includes my topic of metal detectors, and not only that but this source also brought S.A.S.S. to my attention.

Hoffman, Shannon. “Finding Common Ground on School Safety.” *Hogg Foundation for Mental*

Health, Hogg Foundation, 7 May 2019, hogg.utexas.edu/school-safety.

Summarize: This article focuses on the largely debated discussion of which two solutions are better at protecting students: secure infrastructure or better counseling/mental health services. It makes several points on how the infrastructure (including metal detectors, surveillance cameras, bulletproof glass, etc.) and the mental health services provide many benefits to academic institutions, and that one without the other can impose major problems. The bottom line of this article indicates that every institution is different, so where their money goes to depends on their various needs from student and staff.

Assess: This article was written by Shannon Hoffman, who works for the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin. She is a credible Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor with a Master’s degree in Social Work and she provides the Hogg Foundation with trustworthy awareness.

Reflect: This source supported both my claim and one of my compromises. It describes the positive influence of safety equipment and implementing mental health counseling and it also explains the idea that it depends on every school’s specific needs in order to become safer.

McCord, Joan, et al. *Education and Delinquency: Summary of a Workshop*. Washington, D.C.,

National Academy Press, 2000.

Summarize: This book provides a factual and probable outlook on several topics such as school safety measures, academics, student devotion, and many more issues, all rooting from the effect of juvenile delinquency in schools. The chapter I read focuses on teachers and staff taking the idea of school crime in mind and implementing procedures and protocol to lessen the crime.

Assess: It was written and published in 2000 and has a bountiful number of respectable researchers who conducted several studies, investigations, and trials in order to learn as much about school climates as they can.

Reflect: This source helped shape part of my claim that metal detectors lessen the chance of someone bringing in a weapon, but it still doesn't eliminate it, which also helps support the counterclaim.

Rodriguez, Rickey. Personal Interview. 9 May 2019.

Summarize: This interview was mainly about my brother, Rickey Rodriguez, and his experience at Skyline High School with the metal detectors. He did not like going through the metal detectors, but he appreciated how safe it felt just having them and monitors as well on campus. He also addressed how other schools who have an average to below average amount of security should consider other options because this world is very unsafe nowadays.

Assess: Rickey Rodriguez attended Skyline High School during twenty fourteen to twenty eighteen. He is my brother and has had different negative and positive experiences with metal detectors, so I consider him a reliable source.

Reflect: This interview with my brother helped support my claim that metal detectors do have a way of making students feel safe by the fact that a weapon cannot be brought in easily, and it also provided the point of schools with lesser security should consider something instead of only counseling services.