

Textbooks and .22's: Support for Carrying Concealed Weapons on College Campuses

The Power of **AND**

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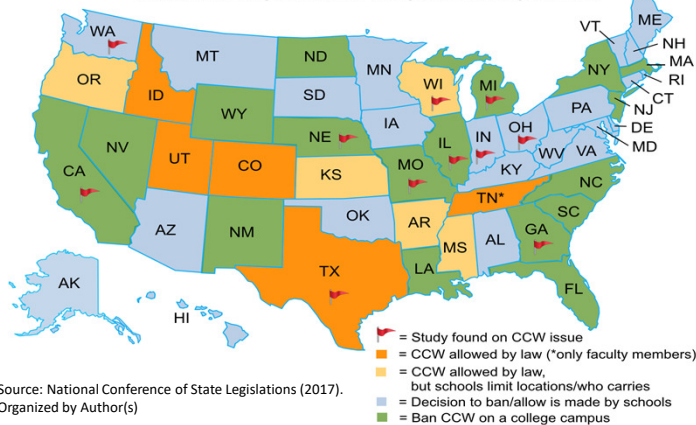
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INTRODUCTION

According to FBI records from Columbine until February 2016 there have been a total of 50 school shootings, with 141 people killed as a result of the massacres.¹ Given the recent proliferation of firearm related violence on American campuses, many states have responded to this issue by passing new legislation about carrying concealed firearms. Currently, 17 states ban concealed weapons, 23 states leave the decision up to the individual university, and 9 states allow for carrying concealed weapons on campus. For instance, Wisconsin is one of the 9 states which has provisions for allowing students to carry concealed weapons on college grounds while the state of Texas also allows concealed carry in campus buildings.²

States are gaining momentum to debate over banning or permitting students to carry concealed weapons on campus with different philosophies (violence/victimization increase versus deterrence/self-protection effect), however, only a handful of studies evaluates students' opinions and fears to inform legislators' decision-making in this regard. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap by examining students and faculty attitudes toward carrying weapons on campus across institutions and states. It is important for legislators to consider students and faculty perceptions on the current issue before making significant criminal justice policies.

Overview: Carry Concealed Weapons on Campus' Laws



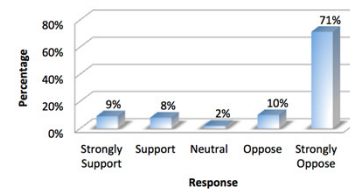
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do university students and faculty support or oppose laws permitting concealed weapons on college campuses?
- Does demographic background impact students' attitudes toward the issue of concealed weapons on campus?
- What reasons do proponents and opponents give for supporting or opposing carrying concealed weapons on college campuses?

METHODS

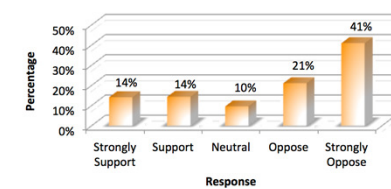
The current study systematically examined 20 peer-reviewed journal articles³ published between 1996 and 2016 which were approved by the Principal Investigator. Keywords such as concealed weapons, open carry, armed campuses and guns on campus were used to identify potential eligible studies to address research questions. After giving an initial review for each article by using summary tables in which systematically collected data for sampling frame, research methods, variables analyzed, findings, future study recommendations and policy implications were included, another two researchers re-evaluated the quality of work to increase inter-rater reliability. Overall, the observation has been made with a total of 233,889 subjects and 347 institutions in America by using the systematic review approach.

Faculty Perceptions Regarding CCW on University Campuses (N = 3,474)



Note: "Cross-walk" statistics encapsulates four studies.⁴

Student Perceptions Regarding CCW on University Campuses (N = 8,670)



Note: "Cross-walk" statistics encapsulates five studies.⁵

RESULTS

- Overall, 75% of reviewed studies tackled the question of whether or not university students and faculty in general support or oppose legislation permitting concealed weapons to be carried on campus.
- Those students who were white, male, republican-oriented, and criminal justice majors were more likely to support allowing concealed weapons on campus.
- Weapon socialization and experiencing victimization might be considered as indicators for those students who were in favor of permitting concealed weapons on campuses.
- The vast majority of respondents across studies reported that allowing concealed weapons on campus would decrease their perceived feelings of safety rather than promote safety through greater individual protection.
- The most common reason given to support carrying concealed weapons was for protection.



A sign prohibiting weapons in Hibbard E. Humanities Hall.

DISCUSSION

Policymakers should consider the voice of the people most affected by the laws they wish to enact. Research conducted has revealed that the people most affected by legislation permitting concealed weapons on campus are overwhelmingly opposed to it. If the goal of such legislation is to increase feelings of safety on campus and perceived ability for students to defend themselves then the data shows that permitting concealed weapons on campus is unlikely to accomplish their goal.

LIMITATIONS

- Data gathered from twenty different peer-reviewed articles that each used their own methods of data collection and analysis.
- Response rates for articles varied widely across different studies.
- No study was done specifically in the Northeast, therefore generalizability could be harmed.
- Several studies were conducted over ten years ago.
- Topic has been highly politicized which could lead to a desirability bias amongst respondents.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Studies should be done to determine the actual, if any, change in safety on campuses after a college or university allows concealed weapons on campus and in buildings.
- Research should continue to be conducted regarding students' opinions on whether or not concealed weapons should be allowed on college campuses and expanded to include more colleges in more regions of the United States.
- Studies which have become out of date should be redone to ensure findings are still relevant.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Pearle, L. (2016, February 12). School Shootings Since Columbine: By the Numbers.
- ² National Conference of State Legislations. (2017). Gun on Campus: Overview.
- ³ Upon request.
- ⁴ Thompson et al. (2012); Bennett et al. (2011) ; Patten et al. (2013); Price et al. (2014).
- ⁵ Thompson et al. (2013); Patten et al. (2013); Wells et al. (2012); Jang et al. (2014); Patten et al. (2013).