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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A tale of two universities: a comparison of college students' attitudes about concealed carry on campus

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Abstract In the aftermath of the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings, policymakers have sought ways to improve safety on college and university campuses nationwide, such as proposing to permit concealed carry license holders to carry on campus. To date, nine states—with Texas being the most recent—have enacted legislation implementing this measure. A limited body of research examines perceptions of students and other members of the campus community about these laws and their passage, with a focus on demographic variations in such attitudes. The present study extends this by considering the potential variation in attitudes by location. The results indicate that both region and gun ownership strongly predict attitudes favorable of such laws, but do so independent of one another. Additional findings, as well as limitations of the study, also are discussed.

Keywords Concealed carry on campus · Virginia Tech · Student perceptions · Campus safety · Firearms

One of the worst mass shootings in the United States occurred on April 16, 2007, at Virginia Tech. The perpetrator, a student at the institution, began his assault during the morning hours at one of the residence halls before proceeding to the school's engineering building, where he continued his rampage. Before committing suicide, the shooter had killed 32 individuals, consisting of both students and faculty alike, and wounded 17 others (Virginia Tech Review Panel [VTRP] 2007).

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This event caused an increase of fear among members of campus communities throughout the nation over the possibility of such violence occurring at their own institutions (Fallahi et al. 2009; Kaminski et al. 2010; see also Elsass et al. 2014; Fox and Savage 2009; Schildkraut et al. 2015a, b). The shooting that occurred shortly thereafter at Northern Illinois University on February 14, 2008, did little to assuage these fears (Kaminski et al. 2010; Northern Illinois University 2010). The infrequency that these shootings actually occur (Schildkraut and Elsass 2016), however, does not mitigate the vulnerability students feel to such violent episodes (Schildkraut et al. 2015a, b; see also Fallahi et al. 2009; Kaminski et al. 2010). This is due in part to the way these tragedies are presented through and framed by the media (Elsass et al. 2014).

Several attempts have been made by various stakeholders, ranging from officeholders to college administrators, to combat these fears through policy and prevention strategies. One such proposal was that individuals possessing concealed carry handgun licenses be allowed to bring their weapons on campus. Over 20 states contemplated enacting such policies between 2013 and 2014, but most of these proposals failed to materialize into law (Hultin 2017). Alternatively, several other states have ineffectively tried to pass legislation that would prevent individuals with concealed carry licenses from bringing their firearms on campus (Hultin 2017). Altogether, as of 2017, there currently are 10 states that allow guns on school grounds if they belong to permit holders (Hultin 2017).

College students potentially are affected most by these policies; therefore, it is imperative to understand their views regarding these controversial measures. Furthermore, such perceptions may be shaped, at least in part, by the state in which the university is located. Given the influence these perceptions have on public policy and, by extension, the passage and implementation of such laws, a continued examination is warranted to understand what processes may be in effect that are shaping such beliefs. The present study seeks not only to expand on a limited body of research examining student perceptions of concealed carry on campus laws, but to do so by considering how such attitudes may vary by location.

Review of the literature

Campus safety and concealed carry post-Virginia Tech

Several stakeholders—including various officeholders and campus administrators—searched for methods to enhance campus safety in the aftermath of the shooting at Virginia Tech (Fox and Savage 2009). This effort, in conjunction with the findings in the VTRP's (2007) report, informed various strategies to increase safety. These strategies ranged from the use of emergency notification systems (see, generally, Elsass et al. 2016; Schildkraut et al. 2015a, b) to threat assessment teams (Deisinger et al. 2008; Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011). Some simpler responses included the use of metal detectors and lockdown procedures (Nedzel 2014; Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011). Implementations of these strategies at various colleges and universities, however, have shown to be incompatible with most campuses' vast layout, making

them ineffective at producing satisfactory results (Fox and Savage 2009; see also Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011).

One unique proposal offered by some policymakers involves allowing concealed carry license holders to bring their firearms onto campus grounds (Birnbaum 2013; Fennell 2009; Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011). Supporters claim that such proposals—if enacted into law—will enhance the security of colleges by permitting concealed carry license holders to be armed for the common defense of the campus community (Birnbaum 2013; Fennell 2009; Harnisch 2008; Lipka 2008; Wiseman 2012). The rationale behind these proposals is not new, given the fact that one study of more than 10,000 students on 119 campuses nationwide found that more than 4% of respondents identified as having a gun at college for protective purposes, despite existing laws banning the firearms (Miller et al. 2002). Similarly, supporters of the legal campus carry argue that the presence of armed individuals on campus can deter mass shooting from happening in the first place (Birnbaum 2013; Harnisch 2008).

The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, in addition to the Supreme Court's rulings in *D.C. v. Heller* (2008) and *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010), are the legal grounds from which these proposals arise (Birnbaum 2013; Nedzel 2014). The Court in Heller (2008) broadly interpreted the Second Amendment by recognizing an individual's right to possess firearms, which the Court then incorporated to the states through its decision in *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010). In reaching these conclusions, the Court did not answer whether such a right to possess firearms extends to individuals on college campuses, which left room for political debate over the appropriateness of concealed carry on campus policies (Birnbaum 2013; Nedzel 2014).

Those opposed to campus carry laws claim that they undermine the necessary conditions for an academic atmosphere (Birnbaum 2013; Miller 2011; see also Fox and Savage 2009). A strain of paranoia stemming from the thought of firearms on campus could seriously obstruct the quality of academic debate and discussion that is characteristic of the college environment (Birnbaum 2013; Miller 2011). In addition, opponents of these policies argue that decisions involving the safety of campuses are best left to be decided by various colleges, and that state governments are too far detached from the implications stemming from these laws to be making these high-stakes choices (Birnbaum 2013; Harnisch 2008; Miller 2011). Not only might officeholders be unqualified to decide what is best for campus safety, but legal responsibility for any trouble resulting from the law still would fall on the various colleges (Birnbaum 2013).

More intricate objections to concealed carry on campus laws concern the various scenarios that might arise if these policies are in place when a violent shooting occurs. One scenario details confusion over who the perpetrator is when several innocent individuals brandish their own firearms in self-defense, creating potential complications for law enforcement officers trying to neutralize the situation (Fennell 2009; Harnisch 2008). In another scenario, one of these innocent concealed carry holders is injured or killed due to police believing he or she is the attacker (Fennell 2009; Harnisch 2008; Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011). Interestingly, people with firearms have been found to be approximately 4.5 times more likely to experience

an injury in a shooting than those without a weapon (Branas et al. 2009).[1] Critical time also is lost when law enforcement officers struggle to identity the attacker amid several other armed individuals thereby limiting their efforts to disable the shooter (Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011). Finally, those who possess concealed carry licenses might contribute to the carnage by being ill equipped to defuse the situation, as they lack the same formal training of law enforcement officers (Harnisch 2008; Nedzel 2014; Sulkowski and Lazarus 2011).

Many publicly funded colleges prohibited individuals from carrying concealed weapons on campus in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech attack. In fact, approximately 26 states disallowed individuals with concealed carry licenses to carry on school grounds (Harnisch 2008; LaPoint 2010). In contrast, Utah ensured that certain safety precautions were taken (see, for example, Lipka 2008), while simultaneously preventing colleges within the state from obstructing individuals from carrying firearms on campus (Harnisch 2008).

Over time, however, trends in concealed carry on campus policies changed. As many as 10 states to date currently allow individuals with concealed carry licenses to bring their firearms onto the grounds of public colleges (Hultin 2017). Some of these states, such as Arkansas, Mississippi, and Wisconsin, enacted this policy through legislation passed (Hultin 2017). Conversely, Oregon (*Oregon Firearms Educational Foundation v. Board of Higher Education* 2011) and Colorado (*Regents of the University of Colorado v. Students for Concealed Carry on Campus* 2012) each have established concealed carry on campus practices through legal challenges. As such policies continue to be debated across the country, it is important to examine and question how effective, or possibly counterproductive, these statutes are at addressing the issue of mass shootings on college campuses (Fox and Savage 2009).

Perceptions of concealed carry legislation

Efforts have been made to better understand how college students view concealed carry on campus policies (Bouffard et al. 2012; Cavanaugh et al. 2012; Jang et al. 2014; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013). It has been found that as many as 78% of students from over a dozen public colleges in the Midwest perceived carrying weapons on college grounds to have no effect on their feelings of safety on campus (Thompson et al. 2013). They also claimed that, if granted the choice, they would not choose to carry firearms while at their respective schools (Thompson et al. 2013). Furthermore, students also tend to disagree with campus carry policies, and do not look upon them in a positive manner (Jang et al. 2014; see also Schildkraut et al. 2017). For instance, a survey of student perceptions at a university in the Midwest reported nearly 50% of respondents disagreed with laws that enabled people with concealed carry licenses to bring firearms to campus (Jang et al. 2014).

[1] It is important to note, however, that this study examined cases of gun assault rather than a mass shooting more specifically (see Branas et al. 2009).

The disparity in perceptions of these policies is complicated further once various attributes of students, such as gender, partisanship, major, and previous victimization, are taken into consideration. These laws tend to be viewed more favorably by males than females, who also perceive there to be benefits to their enactment (Jang et al. 2014; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013). Partisanship also plays an influential role in predicting how people would view concealed carry on campus policies; for instance, conservative respondents are more likely to view them favorably than those not identifying as conservative (Bouffard et al. 2011; Jang et al. 2014; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013). Since conservatives tend to be more supportive of Second Amendment rights, it is logical that those whose partisanship leans more to the right will look upon these policies in a more accepting manner (Jang et al. 2014). Similarly, it has been found that a positive relationship exists between identifying politically with partisan groups other than the Democratic Party and possessing beliefs that these policies have advantages (Thompson et al. 2013). Another predictor of perceptions of these policies is the level to which one is accustomed to firearms (Jang et al. 2014; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013). Individuals are at a greater likelihood of approving these laws, for example, when his or her acquaintances are familiar with such weapons (Jang et al. 2014).

Having previously fallen victim to crime also has been found to influence students' views of concealed carry on campus policies (Bouffard et al. 2011; Thompson et al. 2013). In some instances, if granted the ability to do so, individuals were more likely to possess firearms on campus who previously had been subjected to a criminal act (Bouffard et al. 2011; Thompson et al. 2013). Other researchers (e.g., Schildkraut et al. 2017), however, did not find a significant relationship with prior victimization and support for concealed carry on campus laws. Finally, researchers have discovered that a relationship also exists between students' perceptions of these laws and their individual majors (Bouffard et al. 2012). Students of criminal justice, for instance, are at a greater likelihood than other students to take advantage of these policies if enacted by possessing concealed firearms on campus (Bouffard et al. 2012). With these different factors taken together, it is evident that various personal characteristics have a significant relationship to one's views of concealed carry on campus policies (Bouffard et al. 2012; Cavanaugh et al. 2012; Jang et al. 2014; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013). It is possible to gain even more insight into the factors associated with how college students view these policies by studying how regional factors may influence student perceptions.

Methodology

In order to understand the potential influences on students' perceptions of concealed carry on campus policies, the present study was framed around the following research questions:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of concealed carry on campus legislation?
RQ2: How do students' perceptions of concealed carry on campus differ across universities?

RQ3: How does gun ownership influence students' perceptions about the legislation?

Students at two mid-size universities—one located in the Northeast (New York) and one from the Southeast (Georgia)—were surveyed, and the data collected were analyzed to answer the research questions. Each university enrolls between 7000 and 8000 students annually, with females representing a slight majority of attendees.

Data collection

Upon receiving approval from each university's Institutional Review Board, web-based surveys were distributed via email invitation to a random sample of 1000 undergraduate students on each campus at the beginning of August 2016. As previous research has found that follow-up contact has a positive effect on response rates, reminders were sent both 10 and 20 days after the initial invitation was disseminated (Cook et al. 2000; Dillman et al. 2009; Sauermann and Roach 2013). The survey was open for 30 days, and a total of 641 surveys were completed between the two universities. This represents a total response rate of 32.1%, which is just outside of the average response rate found for email surveys by previous research, which typically falls between 33 and 40% (see Cook et al. 2000; Shih and Fan 2009).

Dependent measures

The questionnaire began with a brief statement about the concealed carry on campus legislation that was passed in Texas at the start of the semester, which read as follows:

> On June 1, 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 11 (S.B. 11), also known as the "campus carry" law, into legislation. S.B. 11 provides that licensed holders may carry a loaded, concealed handgun throughout public university campuses, beginning August 1, 2016. Each college and university may prohibit concealed weapons in certain "sensitive areas," but are required to post notices once the sensitive area designation has been approved by the Board of Regents. Examples of sensitive areas are establishments where 51% or more of income is derived from the sale of alcohol, during K-12 sponsored activities, or at polling places when voting is in progress. Colleges and universities are required to display the regulations on the campus' website and in correspondence with faculty, staff, and students.[2] Private institutions may continue to prohibit concealed handguns on campus.
>
> S.B. 11 differs from the Open Cary Law (House Bill 910) currently in effect in the state, which allows individuals with concealed handgun licenses to openly

[2] The following link, which opened in a new browser window, was included here as an example of such regulations: https://campuscarry.utexas.edu/policies.

carry a holstered handgun in public. Open carry remains prohibited on college and university campuses.

In addition to Texas, eight (8) other states—Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Utah, and Wisconsin—also permit concealed carry on campus.

Two specific questions were asked assessing the direct support for the passage of similar legislation in their state and whether they would still attend their respective university if concealed carry was allowed. Response categories were structured in five-point Likert-type, multiple choice formats, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for each question.

Three additional scaled measures also were included in the analysis assessing indirect support for concealed carry on campus pertaining to the perceived protection, comfort, and safety value of such legislation (Table 1). The scales were created using multiple questions to underscore student perceptions of these broader issues, as outlined in the following paragraphs. Those responses that contained any missing values were coded as missing for the total additive scaled response. This resulted in a small proportion of the total sample (6–7%) being excluded from each analysis.

First, two questions, located in the panel that followed the statement summarizing the Texas law, asked respondents to rate their belief that people would be more capable of protecting (1) themselves and (2) others if they were allowed to carry their guns on campus. Response categories also followed the same five-point Likert structure as the previous questions. An additive scale then was created using the responses to the two questions assessing the protection value of firearms on campus, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .969. Responses ranged from 2 to 10, with an overall mean response value of 6.43. Interestingly, the mean of the scale

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for selected outcome measures

	New York	Georgia	Total
Protection value			
Mean	5.93	6.98	6.43
Maximum	2	2	2
Minimum	10	10	10
N	334	306	640
Comfort level			
Mean	10.79	17.18	13.86
Maximum	0	0	0
Minimum	30	30	30
N	333	307	640
Safety policies			
Mean	22.73	24.02	23.35
Maximum	6	6	6
Minimum	30	30	30
N	328	303	631

suggests that, on average, students at both universities generally are split about the potential protection value of having guns on campus. Examination into individual responses by school, however, reveals a different pattern, as over 36% of students in the university in Georgia expressed full agreement (a scaled value of 10) in support of the protection value of guns on campus, compared to just 14.4% in the university in New York.

Students' perceived comfort level with guns on campus was assessed on a scale of 0 (not at all comfortable) to 10 (completely comfortable) of attending classes, living in on-campus housing, and participating in on-campus activities with individuals who were carrying a concealed weapon. An additive scale then was created assessing their overall comfort level with guns on campus, producing a Cronbach's alpha of .979. After scaling, responses ranged from 0 to 30, with an overall mean score of 13.86. Similar to protection value, inspection of individual responses reveals a considerable disparity, particularly among the extreme ends of the scale. Specifically, while students at the Georgia university were most likely to report complete comfort with guns in various aspects of campus life (with 33.6% scaling at 30), students in the northeast were considerably more likely to report complete discomfort with the allowance of firearms (34.5% scaling at 0).

Finally, respondents were asked a series of six questions pertaining to safety policies: whether students should be allowed to store their firearms in their dorm rooms if the guns were locked in a safe; the requirement that the university provide such safes; allowing professors to store their weapons in their offices; requiring copies of concealed carry licenses to be on file for both students and faculty/staff; and requiring the university to implement safeguards to prevent unlicensed gun owners from bringing such weapons on campus. Responses again were structured in a five-point Likert-type format, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." An additive scale, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .752, then was created for these safety policies. Combined responses ranged from 6 to 30, with an overall mean score of 23.35, suggesting that students generally support safety-related policies if guns were to be allowed on campus. This finding also was consistent across both schools when responses were examined individually.

Finally, once the individual scales were created, the measures were further collapsed according to the original response categories relative to the individual survey questions. Since these questions originally ranged from disagreement to agreement, the newly constructed scales similarly were collapsed into five-point Likert categories. For safety policies, for example, scaled responses between 6 and 10 were recoded to represent "Strongly Disagree" (1),11–15 were recoded to "Disagree" (2), 16–20 were recoded to "Neither Agree nor Disagree" (3), 21–25 were recoded to "Agree" (4), and 26–30 were recoded to "Strongly Agree" (5). This process was repeated for the protection value measure relative to the number of questions (two). Comfort also was recoded relative to the number of questions and response options, with categories for low (0–10), moderate (11–20), and high (21–30) levels of comfort.

Independent variables

Beyond the items pertaining to support of the legislation passed in Texas, comfort with guns on campus, protective value, and safety policies, respondents also were asked a series of demographic questions that were expected to impact perceptions of the legislation. Table 2 presents an overview of the demographics of the sample. Standard measures, such as age, race, and sex, were included as control variables. Age was measured continuously, ranging from 17 to 60 years of age, with a total mean age of 22 years. Students at the university in Georgia were older, on average, than those attending the school in New York, with mean ages of 24 and 20 years, respectively. This difference in age among students across

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for respondents

Variable	New York		Georgia	
	N	%	*N*	%
Age				
Under 18	21	6.3	1	0.3
18–20	216	64.7	93	32.0
21–23	72	21.6	96	33.0
24 or older	14	4.2	101	34.7
Sex				
Male	150	44.9	112	37.2
Female	181	54.2	189	62.8
Race/ethnicity				
White	266	79.6	212	71.6
Black	23	6.9	52	17.6
Asian	9	2.7	10	3.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.6	2	0.7
Biracial/Multiracial	19	5.7	20	6.8
Political party affiliation				
Republican	68	20.9	103	34.8
Democrat	133	40.8	75	25.3
Independent	87	26.7	68	23.0
Other	38	11.7	50	16.9
Gun owner				
Yes	44	13.2	116	38.4
No	285	85.3	186	61.6
Violent crime victim				
Yes	33	9.9	49	16.3
No	299	89.5	251	83.7
Lives in on-campus housing				
Yes	230	68.9	74	24.7
No	102	30.5	226	75.3

universities likely also contributes to why a larger percentage those attending the New York university also live on campus (68.9%) compared to students at the university in Georgia (24.7%).

Due to the smaller overall proportion of respondents who identified as African American (12.2%), Asian (3.1%), biracial/multiracial (6.3%), or being from other races (0.7%), race was dichotomized as White and non-White (reference group). Sex also was dichotomized, with females serving as the reference group as males typically have a higher rate of gun ownership (Lott 2010; Smith 2001). The distribution of respondents across both race and sex measures was similar between the two universities.

Several additional control variables also were included in the analysis. First, respondents were asked which political party they most identified with. Responses then were dichotomized into Republican and non-Republican (reference group), as the former also is more likely to own a firearm compared to their other political counterparts (Lott 2010; McCarthy 2014). When examining the distribution of partisanship by location, a noticeable difference is present. Specifically, individuals identifying as Republican are more common at the university in Georgia (34.8%) than the university in New York (20.9%). Instead, respondents from New York more commonly reported their political party affiliation as Democrat (40.8%, compared to 25.3% in Georgia).

Next, respondents were asked whether they personally owned a firearm, as well as if they had ever been the victim of a violent crime. Those individuals who did not own a gun (74.6%) or had not been the victim of such crime (87.0%) served as the reference groups for their respective measures. While the university in Georgia was slightly higher in the proportion of students who had been the victim of a violent crime (16.3% compared to 9.9%), the disparity in gun ownership was considerably more noticeable. In fact, students in Georgia were nearly three times more likely to report firearm ownership than those in New York (38.4% vs. 13.4%).

Finally, respondents were asked whether they lived on campus, as laws regarding concealed carry at universities also include provisions for firearms being kept in such housing. In the full sample, respondents were nearly even in respect to whether they resided on- versus off-campus. When disaggregating by location, however, on-campus residency was more common for students in New York (69.3%) compared to those in Georgia (24.7%).

Findings

In order to better understand students' perceptions of concealed carry on campus laws and the potential impact of regionality, it is important to examine these responses within the framework of each research question.

Bivariate analyses

The first research question provides a consideration of students' direct perceptions of concealed carry on campus legislation. Descriptive estimates for their responses are presented in Table 3 for both the total sample as well as the university subsamples. Students first were asked whether they supported legislation similar to the Texas law being passed in their state. Collectively, respondents were nearly even in their opinions. While just over 40% expressed some level of agreement with the statement "I would support the passage of legislation similar to S.B. 11 in my state," approximately 42% said they would not support such enactment, which is consistent with previous research studies (see, for example, Schildkraut et al. 2017). When examining responses based on university, students in Georgia were more likely to support the passage of concealed carry on campus compared to those in New York (50.3% vs. 30.6%). Even more specifically, those at the Georgia university were most likely to strongly support the legislation, whereas those in New York were most likely to express strong disagreement with the law. This considerable difference in responses indicates that students may be likely to differ in their support according to where they live and attend school.

Students also were asked whether they would still attend their university if such legislation were to be passed in their respective state. Both in the full sample and

Table 3 Support for concealed carry on campus legislation

Attitude towards		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would support the passage of legislation similar to S.B. 11 in my state	New York					
	%	31.1	16.8	21.0	16.5	14.1
	n	104	56	70	55	47
	Georgia					
	%	22.5	13.4	13.7	13.4	36.9
	n	69	41	42	41	113
	Total					
	%	27.1	15.2	17.6	15.0	25.1
	n	173	97	112	96	160
I would still attend my university if my state passed legislation similar to the bill in Texas	New York					
	%	12.3	12.3	18.9	34.7	21.6
	n	41	41	63	116	72
	Georgia					
	%	11.1	8.2	12.1	24.2	44.4
	n	34	25	37	74	136
	Total					
	%	11.7	10.3	15.7	29.7	32.6
	n	75	66	100	190	208

when examining by university, students overwhelmingly expressed that they would maintain their attendance in the event of concealed carry on campus laws being enacted. One limitation of this measure is that students may maintain their enrollment at a certain university for a variety of reasons beyond support, or lack thereof, of concealed carry on campus. While those in agreement with maintaining attendance may do so for a variety of reasons, disagreeing with this statement does indicate a direct influence strong enough to impact one's behavior. It is clear if one disagrees with continued attendance, then one's perception of anticipated concealed carry on campus policies could alter their behavior. Overall, 22% of students from either university indicated that they strongly disagreed or disagreed with remaining enrolled at the university after concealed campus carry legislation is passed. Specifically, nearly 25% of respondents at the university in New York and just over 19% of those at the university in Georgia expressed disagreement with enrolling at a university where concealed carry on campus is permitted (Table 3). This similar reporting suggests that, regardless of location, the allowance of guns on campus may be a factor in where respondents choose to go to school.

Multivariate analyses

While univariate and bivariate analyses can be helpful for understanding how support for concealed carry on campus policies is distributed, more complex analysis is needed to ascertain what specific factors are influencing such perceptions. Accordingly, multinomial logistic regression models were estimated for the five separate dependent measures in the study. This analytic approach assesses the dependent variable by each category: strongly agree (reference group), agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. This approach is appropriate because the estimated effect of the independent variable differs across categories of the dependent measure (Hosmer et al. 2013). Multinomial regression provides the odds ratio of a certain change in perception for each level of agreement in the dependent variable.[3]

Table 4 presents the results of the regression models for the direct measures of perceived support for concealed carry on campus legislation. Table 5 presents the indirect estimates pertaining to comfort, Table 6 presents the estimates related to protection value, and Table 7 presents estimates correlated with related safety protocols.[4]

The study's second research question concerns the differences in perceptions about concealed carry on campus policies between universities. In first examining

[3] Although this analytic approach is the most appropriate, it does maintain certain limitations. Comparisons are made between each category of the dependent variable. This limits the inferences that can be made across categories of the dependent variable to only comparisons to the reference category, strongly agree. Furthermore, this categorization of the logistic regression analysis results in a loss of power in the regression estimates.

[4] Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF) and was not determined to reach problematically high levels (VIF < 4).

Table 4 Multinomial logistic regression results for support of concealed carry on campus legislation

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
I would support the passage of legislation similar to S.B. 11 in my state ($n = 601$)				
Age	.036 (.026)	.043 (.027)	− .018 (.033)	.018 (.026)
Sex	− .725 (.288)*	− .838 (.323)**	− .232 (.294)	− .060 (.293)
White	− .381 (.354)	.105 (.398)	− .190 (.378)	− .262 (.384)
Republican	− 2.261 (.347)***	− 2.252 (.394)***	− 1.474 (.321)***	− .919 (.301)**
Gun owner	− 2.261 (.374)***	− 2.202 (.429)***	− 1.678 (.358)***	− 1.018 (.318)***
Victim of violent crime	− .393 (.393)	− .815 (.466)	− .666 (.449)	− .697 (.447)
Lives on-campus	.429 (.329)	.393 (.364)	.514 (.338)	.016 (.337)
Location (NY)	.982 (.326)**	.700 (.360)	.709 (.334)*	.935 (.334)**
(Constant)	.559 (.752)	− .205 (.820)	.960 (.897)	− .139 (.793)
Log likelihood = 1190.14***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .349$				
I would still attend my university if my state passed legislation similar to the bill in Texas ($n = 602$)				
Age	.020 (.026)	.033 (.026)	− .038 (.035)	− .012 (.022)
Sex	− .940 (.342)**	− .694 (.342)*	− .887 (.297)**	− .612 (.235)**
White	− 1.296 (.368)***	− .783 (.387)*	− .853 (.352)*	− .122 (.319)
Republican	− 1.290 (.397)***	− 2.201 (.557)***	− 1.687 (.377)***	− .962 (.249)***
Gun owner	− 1.066 (.411)**	− 2.076 (.570)***	− 1.408 (.412)***	− 1.141 (.268)***
Victim of violent crime	− .460 (.453)	− .227 (.454)	− .952 (.482)*	− .595 (.353)
Lives on-campus	− .020 (.371)	.364 (.394)	.154 (.336)	.156 (.267)

Table 4 continued

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Location (NY)	1.052 (.376)**	.826 (.396)*	.838 (.336)*	.729 (.266)**
(Constant)	.129 (.788)	− .601 (.806)	1.585 (.913)	.931 (.662)
Log likelihood = 1101.76***				
Nagelkerke R^2 = .308				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 5 Multinomial logistic regression results for protection value for guns on campus ($n = 603$)

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Age	.033 (.026)	.021 (.030)	.019 (.031)	.021 (.023)
Sex	− .829 (.297)**	− 1.128 (.312)***	− .461 (.330)	− .528 (.259)*
White	− .776 (.368)*	− 1.049 (.382)**	− .549 (.415)	− .264 (.360)
Republican	− 2.268 (.379)***	− 1.786 (.361)***	− 2.034 (.416)***	− 1.269 (.268)***
Gun owner	− 1.870 (.385)***	− 1.562 (.408)***	− 2.377 (.522)***	− 1.032 (.281)***
Victim of violent crime	.054 (.403)	− .512 (.466)	− .451 (.514)	− .327 (.383)
Lives on-campus	.712 (.339)*	.671 (.348)	.367 (.377)	.463 (.295)
Location (NY)	.596 (.335)	1.287 (.356)***	.624 (.377)	.684 (.292)*
(Constant)	.484 (.768)	.487 (.860)	.283 (.893)	.340 (.719)
Log likelihood = 1153.82***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .346$				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 6 Multinomial logistic regression results for comfort with guns on campus ($n = 603$)

	Student perceptions	
	Low comfort *b* (SE)	Moderate comfort *b* (SE)
Age	.043 (.023)	− .013 (.029)
Sex	− 1.040 (.247)***	− .336 (.271)
White	− .633 (.309)*	− .447 (.351)
Republican	− 2.077 (.284)***	− .967 (.288)***
Gun owner	− 2.510 (.332)***	− 1.535 (.327)***
Victim of violent crime	− .451 (.360)	− .288 (.413)
Lives on-campus	.807 (.279)**	.393 (.307)
Location (NY)	.892 (.280)***	.435 (.305)
(Constant)	.592 (.668)	.581 (.804)
Log likelihood = 671.356***		
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .444$		

High comfort serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 4, the results indicate that there is in fact a difference in perception across university. Consistent with the descriptive estimates of this dependent variable, students at the university in New York are twice as likely as those at the Georgia university to strongly disagree, compared to strongly agreeing, with supporting concealed campus carry on campus ($b = .982$, $p < .01$). Similarly, these same students (New York) also are more likely to express overall disagreement with the idea of continuing to attend their university if such legislation were passed than to strongly agree with such a sentiment (Strongly disagree: $b = 1.052$ $p \leq .01$; Disagree: $b = .826$, $p \leq .05$). Together, these findings mean that students attending the New York university are more likely to view concealed campus legislation as relevant to their enrollment decision. However, this finding contrasts with earlier estimates reported in Table 3 that indicated students at both universities still would attend their schools. Thus, even though respondents from either location may agree upon continuing enrollment for a number of reasons, the location of the university may play a role in student's decision to discontinue attendance in anticipation of concealed campus carry legislation.

Consideration also was given to how respondents perceived the protection value of guns, their comfort with firearms on campus, and support for the requirement of safety protocols if the legislation were passed. The multinomial logistic regression models for these measures are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7. In all three tables, university location again was found to be a significant predictor in student perceptions. Specifically, as illustrated in Table 5, students in New York were significantly more likely to disagree compared to strongly agree that guns on campus offer a protective value ($b = 1.287$, $p \leq .001$).

Table 7 Multinomial logistic regression results for safety policies related to guns on campus ($n = 594$)

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Age	.018 (.064)	.096 (.036)**	.058 (.024)*	.041 (.021)*
Sex	.282 (.563)	.963 (.570)	.047 (.252)	.144 (.210)
White	− 2.095 (.618)***	− .234 (.580)	− .506 (.292)	− .092 (.262)
Republican	.271 (.679)	− 21.548 (.000)	− 1.016 (.306)***	− .804 (.233)***
Gun owner	− 1.573 (1.099)	− .705 (.655)	− 1.124 (.352)***	− .456 (.250)
Victim of violent crime	.384 (.829)	.337 (.651)	− .100 (.387)	.178 (.309)
Lives on-campus	.574 (.691)	1.089 (.691)	.273 (.282)	.656 (.238)**
Location (NY)	1.109 (.694)	− .976 (.682)	.902 (.293)**	.387 (.238)
(Constant)	− 2.714 (1.711)	− 4.646 (1.183)***	− 1.705 (.677)*	− 1.219 (.593)*
Log likelihood = 942.622***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .208$				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 8 Multinomial logistic regression results for support of concealed carry on campus legislation, interaction term added

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
I would support the passage of legislation similar to S.B. 11 in my state ($n = 601$)				
Age	.034 (.025)	.041 (.027)	− .019 (.033)	.019 (.026)
Sex	− .708 (.287)*	− .824 (.322)*	− .224 (.294)	− .063 (.295)
White	− .397 (.353)	.092 (.397)	− .199 (.378)	− .245 (.386)
Republican	− 2.247 (.347)***	− 2.238 (.394)***	− 1.466 (.321)***	− .919 (.302)***
Gun owner	− .227 (1.156)	− 1.222 (1.266)	− 1.278 (1.047)	− 1.718 (.929)
Victim of violent crime	− .355 (.393)	− .787 (.466)	− .650 (.449)	− .714 (.449)
Lives on-campus	.420 (.331)	.384 (.364)	.508 (.338)	.033 (.337)
Location (NY)	1.175 (.371)**	.841 (.403)*	.813 (.384)*	.832 (.399)*
Location × gun owner	− 1.567 (.895)	− .744 (.936)	− .292 (.698)	.449 (.603)
(Constant)	.511 (.747)	− .229 (.816)	.943 (.894)	− .105 (.790)
Log likelihood = 1183.98***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .356$				
I would still attend my university if my state passed legislation similar to the bill in Texas ($n = 602$)				
Age	.018 (.026)	.034 (.026)	− .040 (.035)	− .011 (.022)
Sex	− .911 (.327)**	− .703 (.346)*	− .881 (.297)**	− .619 (.236)**
White	− 1.305 (.366)***	− .766 (.390)*	− .885 (.352)*	− .104 (.321)
Republican	− 1.272 (.398)***	− 2.213 (.557)***	− 1.684 (.377)***	− .967 (.249)***
Gun owner	1.188 (1.406)	− 4.901 (2.203)*	− .847 (1.214)	− 1.743 (.798)*
Victim of violent crime	− .442 (.453)	− .253 (.456)	− .950 (.482)*	− .609 (.354)
Lives on-campus	− .025 (.375)	.374 (.392)	.154 (.336)	.163 (.267)
Location (NY)	1.234 (.416)**	.692 (.417)	.865 (.367)*	.646 (.302)*

Table 8 continued

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Location × gun owner	− 1.792 (1.150)	1.814 (1.245)	− .392 (.833)	.414 (.524)
(Constant)	.040 (.796)	− .547 (.806)	1.593 (.917)	.950 (.663)
Log likelihood = 1093.84***				
Nagelkerke R^2 = .318				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 9 Multinomial logistic regression results for protection value for guns on campus, interaction term added ($n = 603$)

	Student Perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Age	.031 (.025)	.019 (.030)	.018 (.031)	.018 (.023)
Sex	− .815 (.297)**	− 1.121 (.313)***	− .453 (.331)	− .513 (.259)*
White	− .800 (.367)*	− 1.070 (.383)**	− .567 (.453)	− .297 (.360)
Republican	− 2.259 (.379)***	− 1.785 (.362)***	− 2.031 (.416)***	− 1.262 (.268)***
Gun owner	− .726 (1.118)	− 1.142 (1.240)	− 2.143 (1.534)	.111 (.813)
Victim of violent crime	.075 (.402)	− .499 (.466)	− .439 (.514)	− .303 (.382)
Lives on-campus	.700 (.340)*	.659 (.348)	.359 (.377)	.446 (.296)
Location (NY)	.824 (.374)*	1.466 (.397)***	.793 (.411)	.961 (.347)**
Location × gun owner	− .858 (.807)	− .323 (.787)	− .179 (1.025)	− .831 (.560)
(Constant)	.438 (.764)	.460 (.856)	.210 (.887)	.278 (.716)
Log likelihood = 1151.08***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .349$				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Meaningful differences across universities were among perceived comfort with guns on campus among respondents. According to the results presented in Table 6, students attending the university located in New York, compared to those in Georgia, were significantly more likely to express having a low amount of comfort with guns on campus as opposed to a high level ($b = .892$, $p \leq .001$). When examining the correlates of perceptions about safety policies related to allowing guns on campus reported in Table 7, an interesting departure from the previous models is found. Specifically, there is not a statistically significant difference among respondents in New York, compared to those in the South, in their lack of support for these procedures (measured by responses of Strongly Disagree or Disagree) compared to approval for them (Strongly Agree). Instead, the difference among respondents by location is most evident in the neutral or moderate responses. Particularly, students in New York were more likely to express neutral opinions about safety practices related to guns on campus as opposed to strongly agreement with such procedures ($b = .902$, $p \leq .01$).

The third research question pertains to the influence of gun ownership on students' perceptions, also outlined in Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7. Notably, though all of the same models are significant, the attitudes are in the opposite direction from the influence of location. First, in examining Table 4, the findings indicate that gun owners are less likely express overall disagreement with a statement indicating

Table 10 Multinomial logistic regression results for comfort with guns on campus, interaction term added ($n = 603$)

	Student perceptions	
	Low comfort *b* (SE)	Moderate comfort *b* (SE)
Age	.041 (.023)	− .016 (.029)
Sex	− 1.029 (.247)***	− .325 (.270)
White	− .648 (.308)*	− .466 (.350)
Republican	− 2.075 (.285)***	− .965 (.289)***
Gun owner	− 1.527 (.973)	− .670 (.959)
Victim of violent crime	− .428 (.360)	− .267 (.413)
Lives on-campus	.805 (.280)**	.387 (.308)
Location (NY)	1.037 (.303)***	.601 (.340)
Location × gun owner	− .708 (.672)	− .627 (.661)
(Constant)	.568 (.662)	.561 (.803)
Log likelihood = 669.692***		
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .445$		

High comfort serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

support for concealed carry on campus legislation than non-gun owners than they are to strongly agree with it (Strongly disagree: $b = -2.261$, $p \leq .001$; Disagree: $b = -2.202$, $p \leq .001$). Similarly, these same respondents also were less likely to express disagreement that they still would attend their school if such a policy was enacted (strongly disagree: $b = -1.066$, $p \leq .01$; disagree: $b = -2.076$, $p \leq .001$).

As illustrated in Table 5, gun owners, as opposed to non-gun owners, were less likely to express disagreement that guns on campus have a higher protective value than they were to strongly agree with such a statement (strongly disagree: $b = -1.870$, $p \leq .001$; disagree: $b = -1.562$, $p \leq .001$). Similarly, as reported in Table 6, individuals who owned such weapons also were significantly less likely to report a low comfort with the presence of guns on campus than they were to express high comfort ($b = -2.510$, $p \leq .001$). Interestingly, gun owners did not statistically differ from non-owners in their disagreement, compared with strong agreement, that safety measures should be employed if firearms were permitted on campus, as indicated in Table 7. Instead, consistent with the location variable, the significant difference was found across more moderate opinions. Specifically, gun owners were less likely to express neutral attitudes pertaining to safety measures than strong agreement about their need compared with non-owners ($b = -1.124$, $p \leq .001$). Thus, regardless of the effect of location and all other control variables, gun ownership plays a significant role in college students' attitudes about campus carry legislation.

While a number of important findings have been discerned up to this point, the results also suggest a potential relationship between location and gun ownership as

Table 11 Multinomial logistic regression results for safety policies related to guns on campus, interaction term added ($n = 594$)

	Student perceptions			
	Strongly disagree *b* (SE)	Disagree *b* (SE)	Neutral *b* (SE)	Agree *b* (SE)
Age	.012 (.065)	.096 (.035)**	.055 (.024)*	.041 (.021)
Sex	.305 (.558)	.990 (.576)	.069 (.251)	.146 (.211)
White	− 2.144 (.622)***	− .238 (.583)	− .542 (.294)	− .092 (.263)
Republican	.318 (.686)	− 19.555 (5040.988)	− 1.010 (.307)***	− .805 (.233)***
Gun owner	18.262 (1.196)***	− 1.317 (1.810)	1.183 (1.108)	− .616 (.706)
Victim of violent crime	.389 (.830)	.321 (.652)	− .077 (.387)	.175 (.309)
Lives on-campus	.588 (.697)	1.116 (.687)	.246 (.285)	.656 (.238)**
Location (NY)	1.314 (.727)	− 1.084 (.753)	1.129 (.322)***	.373 (.267)
Location × gun owner	− 18.929 (.000)	.536 (1.353)	− 1.754 (.860)*	.103 (.469)
(Constant)	− 2.273 (1.741)	− 4.652 (1.181)***	− 1.764 (.679)**	− 1.198 (.590)*
Log likelihood = 934.806***				
Nagelkerke $R^2 = .220$				

Strongly agree serves as the reference (comparison) category and is thereby omitted from the table

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

these both were strong and consistent predictors of the students' perceptions about the legislation. Accordingly, a set of supplementary analyses were run to assess any potential interaction effects. Table 8 reestimates the regression models for support for the legislation and continued attendance if passed with the inclusion of the interaction term. The results indicate that the interaction between location and gun ownership is not significant in the context of support for concealed carry on campus legislation nor when considering if respondents will continue attending their university if a similar law was enacted.

Similarly, as illustrated in Tables 9 and 10, the interaction term has no significant predictive effect on perceptions of guns' protective value nor respondents' perceived comfort with their presence on campus. The interaction of location and gun ownership also fails to predict respondents' attitudes about potential safety policies to be enacted with the legislation (Table 11). Ultimately, this provides even greater support for the earlier findings that both student location and firearm ownership, independent of one another, are influential and meaningful to how respondents feel about anticipated campus carry legislation. These findings are discussed further in the next section.

Discussion

Since the Virginia Tech shootings in 2007, college administrators, politicians, and other community stakeholders have sought ways in which to prevent the next tragedy from occurring on campuses nationwide. Among the policies introduced is the allowance of concealed carry on campus for licensed firearms owners. To date, 10 states have enacted such legislation, with Texas, whose law went into effect at the start of the 2016–2017 academic year, being one of the most recent to implement such a policy prior to the start of this study.[5] Researchers (e.g., Jang et al. 2014; Patten et al. 2013; Schildkraut et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013) have begun exploring how students—the largest segment of the campus population potentially affected by the implementation of such laws—perceive these policies. Absent this body of literature, however, is consideration of how location and gun ownership may influence these attitudes; the present study sought to overcome this gap.

As the results of the present study indicate, both location and gun ownership are consistent predictors of attitudes related to concealed carry on campus policies. In particular, individuals from New York were less likely to support the passage of a similar law on their campus than students in Georgia. These students also were less likely to express that they would continue to attend their school if legislation was passed; they also perceived a lower protection value of guns, reported lower level of comfort with their presence on campus, and conveyed less support for safety-related policies, compared to students in the Southeast. Conversely, gun owners were more likely to support similar policies and continue their attendance, perceive a protective value for firearms, express comfort with their presence on campus, and subscribe to proposed safety measures if they were allowed at the university.

These findings are both interesting and potentially interrelated. Historically, research has found that gun ownership is more prevalent in the South than in the Northeast (Kalesan et al. 2016; Morin 2014; Smith and Son, 2015). Examining rates of ownership in the two states surveyed further supports that notion. In 2013, for example, the rate of gun ownership in Georgia was 31.6%, which also was higher than the national average (Kalesan et al. 2016). Comparatively, New York's rate of ownership was nearly one-third of that—just 10.3% of residents reported owning firearms (Kalesan et al. 2016). This disparity in ownership by location may explain why those in the Northeast are less supportive of concealed carry on campus policies and other measures related to such laws.

The potential for a relationship between location and gun ownership was assessed by adding an interaction term to the models. Interestingly, this term was not significant, thereby suggesting that the effects of these two variables are not contingent upon one another. Moreover, when the interaction term was added to the models, the effects of gun ownership as an independent measure all but disappeared, whereas the significance of location remained. Thus, while both location and gun ownership are strong predictors of attitudes related to concealed carry on campus

[5] The Governor of Georgia signed a revised version of the state's concealed carry on campus law into effect in May 2017, after the completion of the data collection period. This made Georgia the tenth state to permit concealed firearms on public college campuses.

policies, the former has a more meaningful and stronger effect on such perceptions than the latter.

One unanticipated finding not directly related to the study's research questions that may also provide insight into the complex relationship between location and gun ownership is political party affiliation. Specifically, it was found across all models—both with and without the interaction term included—that respondents who identified as Republican were more supportive of having concealed carry on campus and were more likely to continue their attendance, perceive firearms as having protective value, express comfort with them at school-based functions, and support safety-related measures compared to their non-Republican counterparts. This finding is important as those identifying as Republican also are more likely to be gun owners (Carroll 2006; Hepburn et al. 2007; Jones 2013). This finding, coupled with the finding that gun ownership rates are higher in the South (Kalesan et al. 2016), suggests that there are cultural processes at work also contributing to the perceived support for concealed carry on campus. Further inquiry, however, would be needed to substantiate this idea.

While the present study provides a number of important insights into the perceptions of students about concealed carry on campus legislation, there are several limitations that must be considered. First, respondents were asked to answer based on their perceptions of anticipated legislation happening in their state, as opposed to responding to legislation already in place and directly affecting them. Had such policies been in effect in the surveyed universities' states at the time of dissemination, it is possible that perceptions may have differed. Second, respondents also may not fully understand the laws as they are written, including that there can be exclusion areas on the campus where weapons are prohibited. Without a full working knowledge of the intricacies of the policy, it is possible that this too is impacting students' perceptions of the laws when considered as blanketed legislation. Furthermore, the inclusion of only two universities in this study limits the broader inferences that can be made about student perceptions across region or state. Rather, the breadth of the survey responses in this study is most appropriate for drawing inferences about student perceptions of concealed carry on campus policies for universities that maintain similar student demographics across comparable locations. Still, as the research has indicated, the relationship between perceptions of concealed carry on campus legislation, location, and gun ownership may be far more complex than anticipated; future research should continue to consider the dynamics that contribute to such attitudes, particularly as they are highly influential and needed to support the laws themselves.

The decision of whether or not to permit concealed carry on campus also has broader considerations and potential implications for campus security as well. As noted earlier, in the event that there is an active shooter situation on campus, the presence of additional guns can lead to a number of problems, including mistaken identity of the perpetrator, increased injuries or fatalities, and delays in first responders being able to reach the scene. Yet given that such acts are particularly rare, other considerations must factor into such a decision.

One such issue that must be examined is the potential impact that these policies have had on campus crime and violence rates more broadly. While mass homicide is

rare, both on and off campuses, the presence of firearms conceivably could impact the rates of other forms of violence, such as assaults, murder, and even suicide. In order to assess such a proposition, additional research must be conducted to look at how the occurrence of these events has changed (or remained the same) with the passage of such laws on campuses in which states have chosen to implement such a policy. Specific facets of such policies (e.g., where guns are permitted, storage requirements, etc.), however, also must be considered in relation to any potential changes in campus violence as they are not applied uniformly.

A second area of consideration for campus security professionals is how to ensure that only people with concealed handgun permits are carrying at the university. As noted earlier, students have previously reported bringing their firearms to campus when the law specifically prohibits them from doing so. If the law were to change, the question becomes how to regulate the presence of these weapons among individuals who should not have them or who should not be bringing them to campus. While it will be impossible for campus security personnel to eliminate the presence of all prohibited firearms, they still must come up with ways in which they can address the possibility of such a problem.

More broadly, a continued discourse about whether the presence of firearms on campus would restrict or alter the academic learning environment is particularly warranted. The results of this study suggest that, at least in part based on the location of the university, this is a possibility for some students. While it is not the position of the researchers of this project to say one way or another that guns should be restricted from college campuses, we do support the idea of such a continued discussion to ensure the needs of the students, faculty, and overall campus community are met. As such needs differ from campus to campus, however, it bears consideration that such discussions and related policy implementations be left to the discretion of university administrators who are on the ground, rather than the states who are disconnected from the needs of these populations.

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