

STUDENT AND FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARD CAMPUS CARRY AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SB11

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With increased attention given to highly publicized incidents of school shootings, Texas is among a handful of states that considered the implementation of a concealed carry policy on their university campuses. Texas State Senate Bill 11 (SB11) made it legal for handgun license holders to carry concealed handguns on college and university campuses, however, the debate surrounding campus carry continues as most states have made no such provision. The university surveyed, like many other in the state, held educational and information sessions to inform students, faculty and staff of the guidelines of the campus carry policy. The current study explores students and faculty/staff attitudes toward campus carry at a midsize southern suburban university in Texas shortly after the implementation of SB11 considering their awareness of the change to the campus carry policy. Findings suggest that students and faculty/staff have similar concerns surrounding campus carry, and also that similar factors predict their support, or lack thereof, for the policy.

Keywords: campus safety, concealed carry on campus, student perceptions, faculty perceptions, firearms

The state of Texas passed Senate Bill 11 (SB11) making it legal for any person, student, faculty, or campus visitor, who possesses a license to carry a handgun (LTC) to carry a concealed handgun on campus. Whether or not to allow concealed carry on campus is a controversial subject that has been the topic of much discussion and debate. For example, a primary question is whether or not colleges are “fundamentally different from the larger society...as a concealed weapon permit is now readily available to most adults who pass a criminal and mental health background check, complete a training class, and pay a generally modest licensing fee” (Cramer, 2014:412). As such, the debate surrounding concealed carry centered on the outcome of campus carry legislation. Specifically, those in favor of concealed carry argued that these policies have a deterrent effect on public shootings (Jang, Dierenfeldt, & Lee, 2014; Kleck & Gertz, 1998; Kleck & Patterson, 1993), while others claim the prevalence of more weapons may increase deadly shootings (Cook, 1991; Jang et al., 2014; Levin & Fox, 1985; Zimring, 1972).

Despite the ongoing debate, Texas’ passage of SB11 went into effect August 1, 2016 allowing a LTC holder to carry a concealed handgun on campus, not open carry, with some

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exceptions for secure areas as defined by the university. The bill is specific to public universities and colleges while providing private universities the option to determine whether to adopt their own campus carry policy.[1] Upon its passage in May 2015, universities had approximately one year to create a campus specific policy detailing where, including dorms and classroom buildings, and within what restrictions, concealed carry would be permitted on campus (Texas Senate Bill No. 11, 2015). This included the identification of gun-free zones where concealed carry would not be allowed. Additional provisions were allowed for identification of where handguns could be carried and how they should be stored (Texas Senate Bill No. 11, 2015).

Campus carry comprises individual ability to carry a weapon on a college or university campus. In addition to Texas, several states currently have provisions for concealed campus carry including Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas Mississippi, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Among remaining states, 16 specifically ban carrying a concealed weapon on a college campus and 23 leave the decision to ban or allow campus carry up to each institution (Guns, 2017). Hence, the majority of states continue to place some limitation on campus carry on their university campuses. Additionally, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety, only 5.31% of 369,117 issued LTC's were to 18-24 year old's in 2016 (Demographic, 2017), suggesting that the average traditional college age student in Texas does not meet the minimum threshold to possess an LTC and, therefore, is not legally allowed to concealed carry under the new law. However, since the bill allows for students, faculty, or campus visitors with a LTC to carry on campus, understanding how students and faculty are affected by the allowance of concealed weapons on campus can be informative to policy creation and responding to common concerns.

While prior studies have examined faculty and student attitudes towards the possibility of legalizing campus carry (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Cavanaugh, Bouffard, Wells, & Nobles, 2012; Jang et al., 2014; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013), this study is the among the first to explore student and faculty/staff attitudes toward campus carry after the implementation of legalized concealed carry on campus. As part of the implementation plan, multiple universities across the state publicized training and educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to increase awareness of the new policy (e.g. The University of Texas at San Antonio, University of North Texas at Dallas, Texas Tech University).[2] As such, we hypothesize that awareness of the implementation of the campus carry policy will affect level of support for concealed carry on campus among both students and faculty. Using data collected from faculty, staff, and students at a midsize Texas suburban university, we explore factors predicting support, or lack thereof, for concealed campus carry.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAMPUS CARRY

The literature surrounding faculty attitudes toward campus carry is sparse commonly examining attitudes in locations where campus carry has not yet been legalized generally indicating that faculty are opposed to concealed carry on their campus as they express concerns for the future safety of their campus as the number of firearms on campus increases (Bennett et al., 2012; Dahl, Bonham, & Reddington, 2016; Thompson, Price,

Dake & Teeple, 2013). For example, Bennett, Kraft, and Grubb (2012) were among the first to examine faculty attitudes towards campus carry finding that the majority of respondents opposed the expansion of concealed carry legislation to include college and university campuses with support or opposition closely tied to political affiliation and gun ownership. Dahl, Bonham, and Reddington (2016) more recently examined attitudes of community college faculty towards guns on campus. Utilizing a sample of faculty from two- and four- year colleges in 18 states, their findings indicate that the majority of community college faculty feel safe on their campus, did not support students, faculty or visitors to conceal carry on campus, and believed that individuals should pass a firearms training course before being issued a concealed carry permit. Their findings further suggest that faculty believe “that allowing guns on campuses would change the atmosphere from one that feels safe to one that feels uncharacteristically threatening” (Dahl et al., 2016, p. 1). Further, Thompson, Price, Dake, and Teeple (2013) surveyed faculty at five universities with no campus carry policy finding that the majority of respondents felt safe on their campuses and did not support concealed handguns on their campuses indicating concealed carry may create more risk than benefit to the campus environment.

Other studies of faculty/staff attitudes towards campus carry have considered the possible allowance of legal carry, general fear of crime, and trust of law enforcement personnel. For example, Bennett and colleagues (2012) explored faculty attitudes toward expanding the places where handguns could be carried including on college campuses. They used several regression models to examine the opinions of 287 faculty/administrators examining six independent variables including support for current gun legislation and support for expanding concealed carry on college campuses. Their findings indicate that faculty opposed the expansion of concealed carry legislation to include college campuses. Further, their results support the relationship between political affiliation and gun ownership and support or opposition of concealed carry on campus (Bennett et al., 2012). De Angelis, Benz, & Gillham (2017) further explored faculty and staff fear of workplace violence and/or trust in police and local government in relation to their support for concealed firearms on campus. Utilizing a sample of 1170 faculty and staff at a single large rural university in the Western United States, their findings indicate that fear of violence and distrust in the police/government are strongly related to support for concealed carry, but that political orientation, social capital, and respondent demographics are also important. Finally, prior to the implementation of SB11, Bartula and Bowen (2015) explored the perceptions of a perceived open carry on college campus bill and the effects that may have on campus crime, firearm incidents, and fear of victimization among students, staff, and faculty. Their findings indicate that Texas University and College Police Officials believed that crime on campus and number of firearm related incidents would remain unchanged but that fear of victimization among students and campus personnel would increase. Respondents remained strongly opposed to any type of open carry bill for college campuses.

Others have explored the potential impact of campus carry initiatives on students' attitudes. Specifically, Cavanaugh, Bouffard, Wells, and Nobles (2012) examined student attitudes towards concealed handguns on campus at two universities. Survey data from

undergraduate students suggests that undergraduate students were uncomfortable with allowing concealed handguns on campus and, further suggest, that policy changes allowing guns on campus may not increase students' feelings of safety on campus. Finally, other efforts have explored the impact of campus carry legislation on education on university and college campuses. Cradit (2017) examined the effects of campus carry on higher education, specifically, whether campus carry in Texas had an educative influence upon postsecondary learning by examining the ways faculty made sense of the new law before and during its enactment and how it influenced their teaching and research decisions. Their findings suggest that faculty teaching decisions and faculty-student interaction behaviors were altered in light of the implementation of a university policy in accordance with SB11. Their findings suggest that passage and implementation of campus carry could have detrimental effects for student success.

Taken together, these results indicate that students, faculty and administrators largely do not support campus carry and that their feelings of safety and fear of victimization may also be influenced by the passage of legalized campus carry. However, no study has examined perceptions of the policy after the passage of SB11 and knowledge of the specific policy as it applies to their campus. The current study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the attitudes of students and faculty/staff at a midsize Texas university after the implementation of legalized campus carry. Specifically, we explore traditional predictors of support for campus carry in light of awareness of the campus carry policy to determine if these predictors operate in a similar manner for students as well as faculty/staff.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

Data for the current study were obtained via an original data collection effort during the 2016-2017 academic year at a midsize Texas suburban university with approval of the university's institutional review board. The university allowed us to send a single email to all registered students, faculty, and staff containing a link to the self-administered electronic survey requesting their voluntary participation. The survey remained active for two weeks to maximize participation in the survey. Respondents were advised that their participation was voluntary, and their responses would remain anonymous and confidential in an attempt to garner honest participation. The results of data collection yielded a sample size of 875 students and 182 faculty/staff as only cases with complete data were retained.

Dependent variables

Support for campus carry. The dependent variable, support for campus carry, was measured by asking student and faculty/staff respondents to self-report their level of support for concealed carry on campus by students, faculty, or staff. Response categories ranged from 1=very supportive to 5=not supportive at all. The final variable was recoded to reflect a dichotomous outcome of 1=supportive and 0=not supportive. Forty-six percent, or 406, student respondents reported support for campus carry while the remaining 469 (54%) were not supportive. Twenty-seven percent, or 49, faculty/staff respondents reported support for campus carry while the remaining 133 (73%) were not supportive.

Independent variables

Six independent variables were analyzed in this study including feelings of safety on campus, prior victimization on campus, confidence in the police, firearm ownership, and awareness of the campus carry policy. An additional independent variable concerning living on campus was included in the student model. These variables were selected based on the literature concerning campus carry and firearm ownership.

Feelings of safety on campus. The first independent variable, feelings of safety on campus, was obtained by asking respondents how safe they felt on campus. Response categories for this question were very safe, safe, somewhat safe, and not very safe and were coded from 1 – 4. Higher levels in this variable reflect the respondent feeling less safe on campus. Students reported a mean value of 2.38 (SD=0.87) and faculty/staff reported a mean of 2.30 (SD=0.87).

Campus crime victimization. The next independent variable addressed respondent victimization on campus. Specifically, respondents were asked if they have ever been the victim of crime on campus and were coded as yes=1 and no=0. Among student respondents, 62 (7%) reported they had experienced victimization on campus and the remaining 813 (93%) reported no campus victimization. For faculty/staff respondents, 12 (7%) reported victimization of campus crime and 170 (93%) reported no campus victimization.

Confidence in police. The next independent variable, confidence in the police, measured the extent to which the respondent feels the police can prevent violent crime on campus on a scale of not confident at all, not very confident, confident, and very confident. This variable is coded to reflect higher levels of confidences in the police preventing violent crime on campus. Among student respondents, the mean for this variable was 2.43 (SD=0.78, R=1-4) and faculty/staff had a mean of 2.37 (SD=0.80, R=1-4).

Firearm ownership. The next independent variable measured respondents' firearm ownership. Respondents were asked to self-report the number of firearms they owned given the following response categories: 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5+. Respondents who reported gun ownership 1-5+ were recoded as 1=gun ownership and those who reported 0 were coded as 0=no gun ownership. We also used a question that asked if the respondent possessed a firearm 1=yes and 0=no. These two variables were added together to create the firearm ownership variable ($\alpha=0.99$). Concerning students, 288 (33%) reported that owning a firearm and the remaining 587 (67%) reported no firearm ownership. With regard to faculty/staff, 58 (32%) reported firearm ownership while the remaining 124 (68%) reported no firearm ownership.

Policy awareness. The next independent variable addressed respondent awareness of recent changes to the university's campus carry policy. Respondents were asked if they were aware the university had recently created a policy for allowing concealed weapons to be carried on campus. Response categories were dichotomous where 1=aware of policy creation and 0=not aware of policy creation. Concerning students, 760 (87%) reported that they were aware of the campus carry policy compared to 115 (13%) who stated they were not aware of the policy at their university. With regard to faculty/staff, 176 (97%) reported

that they were aware of the campus carry policy and the remaining 6 (3%) stated that they were not aware of the policy.

Lives on Campus. The last independent variable focused on if the student respondent lives on campus. Response categories were dichotomous where 1=lives on campus and 0=lives off campus. Concerning student respondents, 170 (19%) stated they live on campus and the remaining 705 (81%) stated they live off campus. This variable is included as a proxy for campus involvement, since those more associated with campus life might have different opinions compared to those who live off campus.

Control variables

There were five control variables for this study including gender, age, race, military experience, and political orientation. The first control variable, gender: male, was measured as 1=male and 0=female. The student sample consisted of 44%, or 389, male respondents and 56%, or 486, female respondent while the faculty/staff sample consisted of 48%, or 87, male respondents and 52%, or 95, female respondents. Being male has been found to be a significant predictor of carrying a weapon for protection (Bankston, Thompson, Jenkins, & Forsyth, 1990; Kleck & Gertz, 1998; Presley, Meilman, & Cashin, 1997) and for support of concealed license possession on college campuses (Cao, Zhang, & He, 2008; De Angelis et al., 2017; Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002; Patten et al., 2013).

Age is a continuous measure where the mean age of the student sample was 25 years old (SD=8 years) with a range from 16 to 62 years old. With regard to faculty/staff, the mean age was 45 years old (SD=13 years) with a range from 20 years to 82 years old. Wilcox and Clayton (2001) report that the probability of concealed handgun license possession increases with age among a sample of students, while De Angelis and colleagues (2017) find that older students are less likely to support concealed carry on college campuses. Based on the prior literature age is included in this study as a control variable.

Race was coded to reflect 1=white non-Hispanic and 0=non-white. The non-white category included Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and other respondents.[3] Concerning the student sample, 608 reported being white non-Hispanic (69%) and the remaining 267 (31%) were non-white. With regard to the faculty/staff sample, 160 reported that they were white non-Hispanic (88%) and the remaining 22 (12%) stated they were non-white. Prior studies have produced conflicting results with regard to the effects of race. For example, Miller and colleagues (2002) found that white respondents were more likely to carry a concealed weapon on a college campus, whereas Wilcox, May and Roberts (2006) found white middle school students were less likely to carry a weapon than other minority groups. Durant, Krowchuk, Kreiter, Sinal, and Woods (1999) further found no difference in race and concealed handgun license possession on campus.

Among student respondents to the next variable, prior military experience, 73 (8%) students reported they were a 1=veteran and the remaining 802 (92%) indicated they were 0=not a veteran. With regard to the faculty/staff respondents, 17 stated they were a veteran (9%) and the remaining 165 stated they did not have prior military experience (91%). Prior

studies have found that military experience is not a significant predictor of concealed carry on college campuses, but that students with prior military experience are more likely to own (Cao et al., 1997; Cook & Ludwig, 1996; Lizotte & Bordua, 1980) or possess a handgun permit than students with no prior military experience (Wells, Cavanaugh, Bouffard, & Nobles, 2012).

The final control variable for this study considered respondents political orientation, where higher levels in this scale reflect being more conservative. Respondents were asked to report their orientation in political matters, by reporting if they consider themselves extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative. Concerning the student sample, the mean was 3.59 (SD=1.74; R=1-7) and faculty/staff had a mean of 2.92 (SD=1.58, R=1-6). Prior studies have found that political orientation is a significant predictor of concealed handgun license/license to carry possession on campus (De Angelis et al., 2017; Jang, Kang, Dierenfeldt, & Lindsteadt, 2015; Patten et al., 2013; Verrecchia & Hendrix, 2017; Verrecchia & Hendrix, 2018).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Student Model (n=875)			Faculty/Staff Model (n=182)		
	%	Mean	SD(R)	%	Mean	SD(R)
<i>Dependent Variable</i>						
Support for Campus Carry	46%	0.46	.50(0-1)	27%	0.27	0.44(0-1)
<i>Independent Variables</i>						
Aware of Policy	87%	0.87	0.34(0-1)	97%	0.97	0.18(0-1)
Feelings of Safety on Campus		2.38	0.87(1-4)		2.30	0.87(1-4)
Campus Crime Victim	7%	0.07	0.26(0-1)	7%	0.07	0.25(0-1)
Confidence in Police		2.43	0.78(1-4)		2.37	0.80(1-4)
Owns Firearm	33%	0.33	0.47(0-1)	32%	0.32	0.47(0-1)
Lives on Campus	19%	0.19	0.40(0-1)			
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Gender: Male	44%	0.44	0.50(0-1)	48%	0.48	0.50(0-1)
Age		25	8(16-62)		45	13(20-82)
Race: White non-Hispanic	69%	0.69	0.46(0-1)	88%	0.88	0.33(0-1)
Military Experience	8%	0.08	0.28(0-1)	9%	0.09	0.29(0-1)
Political Orientation		3.59	1.74(1-7)		2.92	1.58(1-6)

RESULTS

The dichotomous nature of the dependent variable supports the use of logistic regression to examine the data used in this study. All analyses were conducted using STATA 15 and are based on the 0.05 significance level. Two models were analyzed (see Table 2)

to examine the factors that predict support for campus carry. The first model examining the factors that predict support for campus carry among student respondents ($n=875$) is statistically significant ($\chi^2(11)=732.46, p=0.0000$), accounts for 75.7% of the variance (Cragg & Uhler's $R^2=0.757$), and correctly classifies 89.26% of the cases. Overall, four variables, feelings of safety on campus, owning a firearm, age, and political orientation, were statistically significant predictors of student support for campus carry. The less safe students feel on campus decreased their support for campus carry by 65% ($OR=0.35, z=-6.23, p=0.000$). Owning a firearm increased student odds of supporting campus carry by 1,273% ($OR=13.73, z=8.15, p=0.000$). The remaining two statistically significant variables in the student model were control variables; age and political orientation. As the age of the student increased, the odds of their support for campus carry decreased by 7% ($OR=0.93, z=-4.00, p=0.000$). Concerning political orientation a one-unit increase (becoming more conservative) increased the odds of a student supporting campus carry by 264% ($OR=3.64, z=12.55, p=0.000$).

The second model examining the factors that predict campus carry support among faculty/staff respondents ($n=182$) was statistically ($\chi^2(10)=119.81, p=0.000$) and accounted for 70.1% of the variance (Cragg & Uhler's $R^2=0.701$), and correctly classifying 89.01% of the cases. Four variables including feelings of safety on campus, owning a firearm, age, and political orientation, were statistically significant predictors of faculty/staff support for campus carry. Two independent variables were statistically significant including feelings of safety on campus and owning a firearm. As faculty and staff feel less safe on campus their odds of supporting campus carry decreased by 74% ($OR=0.26, z=-3.28, p=0.001$). The other statistically significant independent variable was owning a firearm. Firearm ownership increased the odds of faculty/staff support for campus carry by 747% ($OR=8.47, z=3.41, p=0.001$). The next two statistically significant were the control variables age and political orientation. As the age of the faculty/staff member increased the odds of them supporting campus carry decreased by 7% ($OR=0.93, z=-2.97, p=0.003$), while being conservative increased the odds of supporting campus carry by 224% ($OR=3.24, z=5.55, p=0.000$).

Table 2. Logistic Regression Results Student and Faculty Support for Campus Carry

Variables	Student Model		Faculty/Staff Model	
	Odds Ratio	z-score	Odds Ratio	z-score
<i>Independent Variables</i>				
Aware of Policy	1.73	1.58	1.00	0.00
Feelings of Safety on Campus	0.35	-6.23***	0.26	-3.28***
Campus Crime Victim	1.93	1.35	3.14	0.59
Confidence in Police	1.00	0.00	1.16	0.36
Owns Firearm	13.73	8.15***	8.47	3.41***
Lives on Campus	0.69	-1.18		
<i>Control Variables</i>				
Gender: Male	1.43	1.14	0.98	-0.04
Age	0.93	-4.00***	0.93	-2.97**
Race: White non-Hispanic	1.18	0.67	0.58	-0.68
Military Experience	1.21	0.35	1.69	0.57
Political Orientation	3.64	12.55***	3.24	5.55***
Constant	0.14	-2.16*	1.05	0.02
n	875		182	
Chi2 (11) / (10)	732.46		119.81	
p-value	0.0000		0.0000	
Cragg & Uhler's R2	0.757		0.701	
Cases Correctly Classified	89.26%		89.01%	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study is an initial exploration of student, faculty, and staff attitudes towards campus carry after its implementation at their university. There are several takeaways from this study. First, awareness of the campus carry policy did not influence support for campus carry among the students nor faculty/staff. There were only two informational sessions for students, faculty and staff at the university surveyed. It is possible that the limited opportunities for dissemination of information prior to the implementation of the campus carry policy failed to address or overcome concerns related to the policy. Furthermore, these sessions were not mandatory resulting in low turnout. In order to increase awareness of the campus carry policies and increase the information given to students, faculty, and staff, these informational sessions should take place when large groups are already present. For students, this could occur during orientation or other events welcoming new or returning students to campus. With regard to faculty, initial training and information sessions could take place during faculty and staff orientation or as a mandatory online training for existing employees. Continued training or follow up sessions outlining crime rates on campus

or instances related to campus carry may also help to overcome concerns regarding their presence on campus. For example, at the campus where this study took place, the campus police department announced that one year after the implementation of campus carry the number of firearm related incidents were similar to those of previous years and that of the incidents that occurred, none were committed by a student or a LTC holder.

The second takeaway from this study concerns the student model, specifically that living on campus did not impact support for campus carry. It would seem that students living on campus would be more invested in campus safety and security and, as such, may be more likely to support a policy that was designed to make the campus safer. However, this did not appear to be the case. One reason may be that those living on campus were younger and therefore not eligible to obtain a license to carry, possibly making it less likely that the policy was of interest. It could also mean that levels of support for campus carry are predetermined. Findings suggest that owning a firearm and political orientation were two factors that predicted increased levels for support. These findings are in line with prior studies (Bennett et al., 2012; De Angelis et al., 2017; Jang et al., 2015; Patten et al., 2013; Verrecchia & Hendrix, 2017; Verrecchia & Hendrix, 2018), and for the most part, are factors that are already established prior to the student arriving at the institution.

Another takeaway from this study is that factors that have traditionally predicted support for firearm related activities predict support for campus carry. Specifically, this study found that owning a firearm and political orientation significantly impacted support for campus carry and had the greatest impact for both students as well as faculty/staff. Campus carry, in general, expanded handgun rights by allowing individuals with a LTC the option to carry their handgun on campus, which may explain student and faculty/staff support for campus carry. The literature has often shown that owning a firearm increases the likelihood of owning additional firearms (e.g. Cook & Ludwig, 1996; Kleck, 1997; Lizotte, Bordua, & White, 1981) as well as supporting policies that expand the carrying of firearms (Dahl et al., 2016). Similarly, the positive relationship between political orientation and support for campus carry is also in line with prior literature and is, in fact, one of the more reliable findings in the firearm literature. Specifically, political orientation, or conservatism, is associated with support for concealed carry (Celinska, 2007; DeAngelis et al., 2017; Dowler, 2002; Holbert, Shah, & Kwak, 2004; Kahan & Braman, 2003; Kleck, 1996; Robbers, 2005; Semet & Ansolabehere, 2011; Wozniak, 2017).

The finding concerning feelings of safety on campus impacted both models in the same direction, as the less safe one felt on campus their support for campus carry decreased. One objective of allowing campus carry was to increase safety and security (Kyle, Schafer, Burruss, & Gibin, 2017) on college campuses in the wake of school shootings (e.g. Virginia Tech), by allowing students, faculty, and staff the means of self-protection, if they have a valid license to carry, as other methods, including gun free zones, are often viewed as ineffective (Smith, 2012). Our finding is in line with prior studies that feeling less safe on campus is associated with a decreased likelihood of obtaining a firearm or permit to carry (DeAngelis et al., 2017). This may be because those who feel unsafe on campus do not view campus carry as a means to increase safety on campus (DeAngelis et

al., 2017), and they may utilize other methods of self-protection such as non-lethal protective measures, walking in groups, or only being on campus during daylight hours (Kyle et al., 2017). Future studies examining additional protective actions may provide further clarification of this relationship.

The goal of this study was to obtain a better understanding the impact of policy awareness and other factors influencing student and faculty/staff support for campus carry. However, there are several limitations that should be considered in light of these findings. First, the cross sectional nature of the data do not allow us to establish temporal order nor allow us to consider the causal relationship between individual factors and attitudes toward campus carry. For example, the data are limited to attitudes after the implementation of the new policy and do not allow for an examination of changes in attitudes over time, or from before the policy implementation. Future research should examine attitudes both before and after implementation to distinguish more specific changes due to the policy. Also, the sample was drawn from a single midsize suburban university in Texas, and as such, the results may not be generalizable to smaller, urban, or private institutions or institutions in other states. Future studies should consider exploring attitudes at a variety of institutions with different student and faculty compositions and in alternate locations.

Another limitation is the method through which the sample was obtained, rather, the self-selection into completion of an online survey sent to all active university email addresses. It may be that respondents were more likely to hold extreme views either in favor or against campus carry. For example, Wells and colleagues (2012) examined nonresponse bias in web-based surveys measuring opinions about changing concealed handgun carrying laws on campus. Their findings indicate that students who responded to the web based survey expressed more extreme opinions and behavioral responses with regard to a proposed policy change to campus carry. There were several constraints beyond our control, such as the inability to send multiple emails or market the survey in a manner that may have overcome these issues that may have impacted our findings. For example, results could be indicative of those with extreme opinions who decided to complete the survey through the single email link.

Finally, the data do not allow us to separate faculty and staff respondents. This could impact the results in that faculty and staff as a group may hold different attitudes towards concealed carry on campus. For example, staff may be more likely to be from Texas and potentially hold more conservative views regarding concealed carry while faculty are more likely to be more diverse in their residential backgrounds and may hold different views on campus carry. For example, prior studies have found that region of residence is a significant factor in firearm ownership (Hill, Howell, & Driver, 1985; Jiobu & Curry, 2001; Marciniak & Loftin, 1991; Smith & Smith, 1995) and support for campus carry (Cavanaugh, et al., 2012), with residing in the south and west having the greatest influence (Cavanaugh et al., 2012; Jiobu & Curry, 2001; Smith & Smith, 1995) on these attitudes. Future studies should attempt to separate out faculty from staff to obtain a better understanding of the factors that impact support for campus carry.

Even with these limitations, this study provides valuable insight into factors impacting support for campus carry among students and faculty/staff. Campus carry continues to generate discussion in light of recent school shootings and violence on college campuses. These findings, may inform university policymakers in developing and delivering accurate information regarding both their own policy as well as the impact of the policy on other campuses.

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NOTES

[1] As of 2016, only one private university in Texas had fully adopted a concealed campus carry policy while two others allow certain individuals to concealed carry with administrative approval. Remaining private institutions have opted out of the policy (Watkins, 2016).

[2] The University of Texas at San Antonio <https://www.utsa.edu/campuscarry/aboutsb11.html>. University of North Texas at Dallas <https://police.untDallas.edu/campus-carry-sb-11>. Texas Tech University http://www.dailytoreador.com/special_projects/rl-campus-carry-now-in-effect-throughout-state/article_2813c36a-67a1-11e6-a364-7b193dea5737.html

[3] Prior to dichotomization the following was reported for the students (S) and the faculty/staff (F/S); Black/African American (S: 46/5%; F/S: 2/1%), Hispanic or Latino (S: 122/14%; F/S: 5/3%), American Indian or Alaska Native (S: 11/1%; F/S: 1/0.6%), Asian (S: 37/4%; F/S: 8/4%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (S: 1/0.1%), and Other (S: 50/6%; F/S: 6/3%).