As students and faculty walked across the Ohio State University campus in Columbus on Nov. 28, third-year student Abdul Razak Ali Artan suddenly plowed his car onto a busy sidewalk, got out and lunged at bystanders with a butcher knife. In less than two minutes he had wounded 11 people before a university police officer arrived and fatally shot him.¹

The incident sparked a campus alert message to “Run Hide Fight” and a 90-minute campus lockdown. It also prompted the Ohio Senate to pass a bill to allow the state’s public colleges and universities to allow licensed individuals to carry concealed handguns on campus.

“I can legally carry a firearm in my home, at the grocery store, when I take a walk through my neighborhood. Yet when I am at Ohio State, I cannot keep myself safe,” law student Jonathan Beshears, who is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, told a pre-scheduled Senate hearing the day after the attack. “If someone attacks me with a butcher knife or an AK-47, I’m supposed to run away, throw things at them or maybe hide under a desk and pray.”²

But some students say allowing anyone other than law enforcement to carry concealed weapons on campuses could make them less safe. “A student militia — a student police force — is something I think we should be very wary of,” says Kaitlyn Hamby, a senior at Florida State University who has battled a similar measure in her state since another student opened fire in a campus library in 2014, injuring three students before campus police shot him.³

In response to several high-profile shootings on college campuses in recent years, dozens of state legislatures are considering
relaxing their 1990s-era “gun-free zone” designations for public college and university campuses, allowing individuals with so-called concealed-carry permits to bring their handguns onto campus. Gun-rights advocates, conservative lawmakers and some faculty and students believe no-guns-on-campus laws infringe on their Second Amendment right to bear arms and hamper their ability to stop violent criminals before police arrive. But gun-control advocates, liberal lawmakers and many campus officials, faculty and students say college campuses are inappropriate — and unsafe — environments for handguns.

“There’s a lot of alcohol binge drinking . . . on college campuses [that results in] a lot of spontaneous altercations,” says Daniel Webster, a professor of health policy and management at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Further, due to their undeveloped pre-frontal cortex, young people are “compromised in their ability to think through what they’re doing and what the consequences are,” he continues. “You add firearms to that type of environment, and you have life-changing, life-ending kinds of consequences.”

But Michael Newbern, assistant director of public relations for Students for Concealed Carry, says, “The question here is: Do you want the only guns on campus to be the ones that are carried there illegally?”

President Trump vowed repeatedly during his campaign to eliminate gun-free zones at schools and military bases. “My first day. There’s no more gun-free zones,” Trump said in January 2016. He has been unclear, however, on whether he wants to lift the bans on guns at K-12 schools as well as college campuses.

While every state permits some form of concealed carry, until recently most of those laws exempted day care centers, government buildings, military bases and schools. Most states barred guns on public college and university campuses after a federal law in the early 1990s designated public primary and secondary schools as gun-free zones.

State laws regarding concealed-carry at higher education institutions now vary widely (see map): 17 states ban concealed weapons on campus; 23 states (including Ohio) allow each institution to decide whether to allow firearms, and eight states — either by law or court ruling — mandate that individuals with concealed weapon permits be allowed to carry handguns on all public campuses. Tennessee and Arkansas allow only licensed faculty members to carry weapons on campus.

However, only Tennessee requires faculty who carry a weapon onto campus to register with campus or local law enforcement. In other places, only state agencies maintain registries of permit holders — databases that are not available to the public — so no one knows who...
or how many people can legally carry concealed weapons on U.S. campuses.\textsuperscript{8}

Private colleges typically set their own firearms policies or are allowed to opt in or out of state laws. For instance, private schools in Texas can opt out of a new state law that mandates colleges and universities allow licensed individuals over 21 to carry concealed firearms on campus. So far, only Amberton University, in Garland, has chosen to allow firearms.\textsuperscript{9}

Liberty University, a private Christian school in Lynchburg, Va., permits students and staff to carry concealed firearms anywhere on campus. Chancellor Jerry Falwell in 2013 announced that guns — previously allowed only outside of campus buildings — would be allowed inside of buildings as well, saying the change would “create a higher level of security on campus than what was found at Virginia Tech.”\textsuperscript{10}

On April 16, 2007, Virginia Polytechnic University senior Seung-Hui Cho, 23, went on a shooting rampage at the Blacksburg campus, killing 32 people before committing suicide.\textsuperscript{11} Less than a year later, on Feb. 14, 2008, 27-year-old Northern Illinois University student Stephen Kazmierczak opened fire in a lecture hall, killing five students and wounding 21 others before killing himself.\textsuperscript{12}

The incidents prompted Students for Concealed Carry and the National Rifle Association (NRA) to push states to loosen campus gun restrictions. Such efforts gained steam after the 2012 massacre of 20 schoolchildren and six staff members at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., by Adam Lanza.\textsuperscript{13} “The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun,” NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre said at the time, arguing for eliminating gun-free zones and arming K-12 security personnel.\textsuperscript{14}

Gun-rights advocates made similar statements in October 2015, after Christopher Harper-Mercer, a 26-year-old student at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Ore., brought five handguns and a semi-automatic rifle into a classroom and killed nine students before police shot and wounded him. He then fatally shot himself.\textsuperscript{15}

Estimates vary of how many gun-related incidents have occurred on college campuses. The FBI counted 12 “active shooter incidents” — resulting in 60 deaths — at institutions of higher education between 2000 and 2013.\textsuperscript{16} Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun-control advocacy group, says there were 76 accidental and intentional shooting incidents on college campuses from 2013 to 2015.\textsuperscript{17}

While campus-carry advocates say students should be able to carry guns under the Second Amendment of the Constitution, opponents note that when the U.S. Supreme Court in 2008 struck down a Washington, D.C., law barring civilians from keeping handguns in their homes, the court said the right to bear arms is “not unlimited” and “should not be taken to cast doubt on . . . laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings.”\textsuperscript{18}

Surveys show most students, professors and administrators oppose having concealed firearms on campus. At the start of the 2016-17 school year, hundreds of University of Texas students protested implementation of the state’s new concealed-carry law.\textsuperscript{19}

Opponents of guns on campus worry that gun-related accidental discharges, suicides and violent altercations could increase the number of campus fatalities. But Dave Kopel, research director of the Independence Institute, a Denver-based conservative think tank, says none of those fears has played out in Utah, which enacted campus carry in 2004, or Colorado, which enacted a concealed-carry law in 2003 that did not exempt college campuses.\textsuperscript{20}

Lucinda Roy, an English professor at Virginia Tech, says she would rather not legalize firearms on campus but is sympathetic to students who support such a policy because “we’re not really doing anything” to directly address issues that can lead people to violence, such as increasing access to mental health care. “So we’re leaving young people vulnerable, and that is inexcusable.” (See sidebar, p. 92.)

Sue Riseling, executive director of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, based in West Hartford, Conn., worries, among other things, that free speech will be chilled on campus, especially if professors begin to fear challenging potentially armed students “to change their understanding of the world and . . . of themselves.”

Republican Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal last year vetoed his state’s permissive campus-carry measure, saying “colleges have been treated as sanctuaries of learning where firearms have not been allowed.” As a
compromise, he signed a measure allowing anyone over 18 to carry stun guns — commercially available “electroshock weapons” — on campus for self-defense.21

As more states and universities consider legalizing concealed weapons on campuses, these are some of the questions being debated:

Would legalizing guns on campuses make colleges and universities safer?

Alex Stewart, state director of Florida Students for Concealed Carry, says concealed handguns on campus would “change the gamble” that a criminal is taking. “Before, you were gambling that .001 percent [of the population] wouldn’t bother to violate the prohibition on concealed carry. Now you’re gambling that if [they do], there will be a good citizen there who can attack . . . them.”

Stewart and other campus-carry supporters cite studies by gun-rights advocate and academic John Lott Jr., author of More Guns, Less Crime and founder of the nonprofit Crime Prevention Research Center, in Swarthmore, Pa., to try to prove that relaxing gun restrictions can reduce crime. Lott found in one study that murder rates fell about 16 percent and violent crime by 18 percent between 2007 and 2015 — a period when the number of concealed handgun permits more than doubled, to more than 14.5 million.22

Stewart contends there hasn’t been “a single case where a permit holder on a college campus . . . has committed a crime.” He also says, “Concealed carriers are abnormally law-abiding citizens; we are almost never convicted of weapons crimes.”

Gun-rights advocates also cite research by Florida State University criminal justice professor Gary Kleck showing that permit holders commit fewer crimes than unlicensed holders and that many victims successfully defend themselves with a gun. “If carry permit holders never commit gun violence,” Kleck asked, “why are [opponents] worried about them being allowed to carry on college campuses?”23

But other researchers refute such correlations between the growing number of gun permits and the falling rate of violent crime. Three researchers, two from Stanford and one from Johns Hopkins, said other factors, such as increased incarceration rates, also must be examined.24

In fact, said David Hemenway, director of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center in Boston, which provides research on training to prevent violence, most firearms researchers agree that having “more guns and weaker gun laws have created a serious public health problem.”25

Already, Hemenway says, we know “for sure that the presence of a gun in the home in the U.S. increases the risk for suicide.” And a dozen studies comparing demographic differences in suicide rates have shown that “the overwhelming factor is guns,” he says, adding that when trying to stop a shooter, gun holders might shoot innocent bystanders or even undercover police responding to an incident. Others worry that police officers might mistake an armed law-abiding student as the shooter.

Drawing on data from the National Crime Victimization Surveys from 2007 to 2011, Hemenway also said that few people actually use their guns in self-defense during a violent crime.26

Little research has focused on the effects of campus-carry laws on campus crime rates. However, a forthcoming 2017 report by Julie Gavran, the Southwestern director of the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, concludes that such laws have not reduced violent crime rates on campuses, particularly sexual assaults.27

Campus-carry opponents also warn of accidental shootings. A University of Colorado staff member in 2012

Americans Divided Over Guns on Campus

Survey respondents were evenly split in 2013 about whether concealed guns should be allowed on college campuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should gun owners with proper permits be allowed to carry concealed weapons on college campuses?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>43%</td>
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accidentally discharged her firearm, injuring herself and another woman, while removing it from her purse to show co-workers. She was fired and faced criminal prosecution, says Patrick O’Rourke, a university vice president.

Rob Jenkins, an associate professor of English at Georgia State University’s Perimeter College, sees both sides in the debate. He agrees that gun-free college campuses might attract criminals who want to “shoot as many people as possible before someone shoots” them. However, he also agrees with several points in a 2016 report by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health that warned various factors of college life make concealed-carry laws more dangerous, including:

- binge drinking, drug abuse and other risky student behaviors;
- ongoing brain development among young adults;
- stress, depression or mental illness, which are increasingly being reported among students.28

Jenkins and others also question the value of relying on state permitting laws, which vary widely across the nation and often have lax or limited requirements. State concealed-carry permitting requirements do not require the same level of training as that required for police officers, says Gene Deisinger, former deputy chief of police and director of threat management services at Virginia Tech after the 2007 shooting rampage.

“Many people who express an interest in concealed carry have not put themselves through that level of training,” says Deisinger, who is now managing partner and co-founder of SIGMA Threat Management Associates, an Alexandria, Va., firm that provides training for colleges on threat assessment. “Even drawing that weapon takes practice to do effectively.”

Florida State’s Hamby, a member of the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, says, “What if there’s more than one student carrying and more than one student who thinks that they can handle the situation? ... The situation gets very chaotic and very messy quickly.”

More recently, the debate has focused on protection for sexual assault victims — a growing problem on college campuses. FSU student Shayna Lopez-Rivas told Florida lawmakers she had been sexually assaulted twice, once on campus, and wants the right “to legally carry a weapon” at all times. “Criminals are already armed, and a gun-free zone sign doesn’t change that.”29

But Andy Pelosi, executive director of the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, says most sexual assault victims on campuses know their attackers, so the woman is unlikely to be carrying her gun. And he warns, “If we start arming people, we may be arming the attacker.”

Should only faculty be allowed to carry guns?

“Let me tell you, if you had a couple teachers with guns in that room, you would have been a hell of a

Florida State University students attend a candlelight vigil on Nov. 20, 2014, after three FSU students were shot and wounded in the library earlier in the day. Gun-rights supporters say their Second Amendment rights shouldn’t end when they walk on campus. Opponents say guns make campuses less safe.
lot better off,” then-presidential candidate Trump said after the Umpqua Community College shooting in 2015 while attending a campaign rally in Franklin, Tenn.  

The following year, Tennessee Republicans pushed through their measure allowing full-time employees of public colleges and universities to carry licensed concealed handguns on campus. The bill excluded stadiums, gymnasiums, hospitals and disciplinary or tenure meetings.

Republican Gov. Bill Haslam allowed the measure to become law without his signature, saying he preferred that schools set their own rules. The bill’s sponsors chose not to include an opt-out provision after learning most campuses would opt out.

The NRA opposed any opt-out provision. “College campuses as gun-free zones present an environment where murderers, rapists and other criminals may commit crimes without fear of being harmed by their victims,” NRA lobbyist Erin Luper said.

Since the Virginia Tech shooting, many states have considered proposals to arm college faculty and administrators. Supporters say staff could provide a layer of protection for students if police cannot respond quickly. Policies restricting firearms on campus invite “the wolves to go after the sheep,” Virginia GOP Del. Bob Marshall said in 2012.

Before the Tennessee Legislature passed its bill, University of Tennessee President Joe DiPietro said he opposed increasing the number of guns on college campuses, as did a majority of University of Tennessee employees in a survey. One responder said: “If this passes, expect an exodus-like event of your top scholars.”

University employee Kristina Robinette said, “Any time that you bring a gun into any place, you’re going to bring awareness to yourself and make people feel on edge, but it’s our constitutional right to, and I believe in that.” Some students also said they would feel safer knowing there was added protection.

Nate Kreuter, an associate professor of rhetoric at West Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C., says the state’s permitting process for carrying a concealed firearm entails only a criminal background check and a class “in how not to get afoul of the law.” And any gun holder who “fancies themselves a hero” during a violent incident would not be in uniform, so how would police know they weren’t an assailant? he asks.

Maria Gonzalez, an associate professor of English at the University of Houston, says she’s concerned about depressed students hurting themselves with guns. Other faculty and students say they fear accidental shootings, such as occurred at Idaho State University in 2014. Just months after the state’s campus-carry law took effect, a professor with a concealed carry permit accidentally shot himself in the foot while in a classroom full of students.

Timothy Furnish, a history professor at Reinhardt University, a private school in Waleska, Ga., says, “A vast majority of college faculty are liberals and are scared of guns,” so most probably would not carry a gun. He supports requiring concealed carriers to undergo rigorous training.

Some faculty and administrators believe a faculty-only policy would solve the potential risks associated with allowing young people to carry concealed weapons described in the Bloomberg School of Public Health report.

“This . . . would greatly lessen the risk of allowing students to have and carry guns on campuses, and there are a lot more students than there are faculty,” says Webster, of Johns Hopkins. But if faculty and staff “were permitted to bring guns onto college campuses, there should be . . . strict rules and protocols” for securing the firearms and specific training requirements to “ensure that legal gun carriers know how to be safe with guns and know when and how to use them when necessary.”

Jenkins, of Georgia State University, says, “I don’t like the thought of professors packing,” but that “responsible staff members who wish to carry, who qualify for the appropriate permits, and who are willing to undergo special training” should be allowed to carry.

Newbern, of Students for Concealed Carry, says his organization understands many people find legalizing weapons on campuses “a very new and radical idea.” So he sees a concealed-carry policy for faculty and staff as an appropriate temporary compromise.

Some professors, however, warn about liability if they carry or use a weapon. Most university policies hold gun permit owners liable for their actions, rather than the university, unless they carry a firearm to fulfill their job duties.
Mass Shootings on College Campuses

At least 64 people, not counting the shooters, have been killed in seven mass shootings on college and university campuses since 2002. Five of the shooters either killed themselves or were shot by police. Congress defined a “mass killing” in 2013 as an incident in which three or more people are killed in a single incident.

University of Arizona, October 2002 (3 killed, 1 suicide)
Student Robert S. Flores, 41, killed three instructors at the university’s nursing school before turning the gun on himself. One victim told her husband she felt threatened by Flores before the shooting.

Virginia Tech, April 2007 (32 killed, 1 suicide)

Northern Illinois University, February 2008 (5 killed, 1 suicide)
Former graduate student Stephen Kazmierczak opened fire in an auditorium using at least two legally purchased firearms, shooting 25 people and killing five. The gunman died of a self-inflicted gunshot.

University of Alabama in Huntsville, February 2010 (3 killed)
Three faculty members were shot to death by biology professor Amy Bishop, who had been denied tenure for the second time the day of the shooting. Bishop pleaded guilty to capital murder and is serving a life sentence.

Oikos University, April 2012 (7 killed)
Former student One Goh fatally shot seven people because the private nursing college in Oakland, Calif., refused to refund his tuition, police said. A grand jury indicted Goh, who was said to be suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, on seven counts of murder in 2014.

Santa Monica College, June 2013 (5 killed, 1 shooter killed)
John Zawahri, 23, shot and killed his father and brother before going on a shooting rampage across Santa Monica, fatally shooting three others. He was armed with multiple guns when police shot him to death on the campus.

Umpqua Community College, October 2015 (9 killed, 1 suicide)
Christopher Harper-Mercer, 26, fatally shot nine people in a Roseburg, Ore., classroom before killing himself in front of students.

Sources: Various news reports; compiled by Anika Reed

Would guns on campus threaten free speech?

Many administrators and faculty members worry that having concealed weapons on campus could discourage free speech.

“College campuses are marketplaces of ideas, and a rigorous academic exchange of ideas may be chilled by the presence of weapons,” wrote several educational associations, including the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers, in November 2015.38

In a poll of more than 20,000 Kansas public college employees, two-thirds said guns on campus would “limit their freedom to teach the material and engage with students in a way that optimizes learning.”39

A prominent University of Texas scholar resigned after the Texas Legislature passed the campus-carry measure in 2015, saying it would impede schools’ obligations to provide a safe learning environment. Several professors at other universities severed ties with the University of Texas, and three professors sued the university, seeking permission to bar guns from their classrooms. They said they feared the presence of weapons would “chill their First Amendment rights to academic freedom,” which involve a “robust exchange of ideas.”40

During a University of Houston Faculty Senate meeting on guns on campus on Feb. 15, 2016, a PowerPoint presentation stated: “You may want to: Be careful discussing sensitive topics; Drop certain topics from your curriculum; Not ‘go there’ if you sense anger.”41

Gonzalez, at the University of Houston, often focuses on hot button issues like the history of racism, sexuality and feminism. She says she hasn’t modified her teaching since the campus-carry policy took effect but is constantly aware that any student could be carrying a weapon.

Gonzalez says she is particularly concerned about weapons on the multicultural Texas campus amid heightened tensions after the election of Trump, who vowed to deport illegal immigrants. “There’s a certain heightened...
awareness now” about the potential presence of firearms and students’ emotional state, she says.

Some Houston students who identify as LGBT feared expressing themselves freely. Robyn Foley, 22, a transgender student, said, “I can’t stand up for my transgender friends, because if I do, and someone gets pissed off, all they have to do is pull out a gun.”

Hamby at FSU says, “A lot of my classes are discussion-based classes where we share perspectives. And I don’t agree with a lot of people, and we sometimes have heated debates. And that’s OK because we’re in an environment that encourages that.” As an activist on women’s issues, cyberbullying and gun control, she says, “I would be less inclined to be as outspoken about my views if campus carry was legal.

However, Newbern, of Students for Concealed Carry, says, in states where concealed weapons are permitted, “we are not hearing about people not being able to engage in healthy debate. We are not hearing about licensees threatening other students with their handguns because they don’t agree with their position.”

The Independence Institute’s Kopel also thinks evidence already shows that “people aren’t going to pull out their guns when there’s a heated debate over Hamlet.”

But some faculty and students worry because they don’t know who is carrying. Tennessee is the only state that requires local law enforcement to maintain a registry of concealed-carry permit holders who plan to carry on campus. But nationwide only law enforcement officers are allowed to check the state registry or ask if a person carries a concealed weapon.

“There’s no more reason to out people who are carrying on campus versus outing those who are carrying in a restaurant,” says Jenkins from Georgia State.

Stewart of Florida Students for Concealed Carry says nobody knows who is carrying a concealed weapon — regardless of whether they are on or off campus. “Have you ever walked off campus and suddenly felt the weight of fear of freedom of expression?” he asks. “The answer is no.”

Those carrying concealed firearms fear a backlash if it were revealed that they were carrying weapons, including possibly even from instructors at grading time, Newbern says. College campuses “are hostile toward firearms and individual liberties in general,” and have limited the free-speech rights of those carrying firearms, he says.

Robert Shibley, executive director of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), says some colleges — such as Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, Texas, and Santa Fe College in Florida — have shut down or tried to block protests by Students for Concealed Carry in which members wear empty holsters, seen as threatening by some students or administrators.

“So any kind of firearm discussion on campuses can be radioactive because of the perceived threat that comes with it,” Shibley says. “Because people seem to be threatening isn’t a reason to cut off controversial expression. Campus is the place you have to have that discussion.”

Virginia Tech’s Roy says she believes both sides of the debate over concealed carry on campus should be heard. Academics often disregard “as right-wing loonies” people who want to be armed in order to defend themselves, she says. “And I think that’s unfair.”

BACKGROUND

Colonial Policies

 Authorities during the colonial and revolutionary eras encouraged young people to be armed and ready for militia duty, and colleges did not specifically ban students from carrying firearms for self-defense.

Harvard, for instance, barred hunting but did not explicitly prohibit all firearms. On April 7, 1759, the faculty voted to allow students to use their firearms only in certain areas, “at convenient Hours, and . . . after Evening Prayers.”

The Second Amendment, contained in the Constitution’s Bill of Rights adopted in 1791, states: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Several states adopted similar constitutional amendments. But in 1813, Kentucky and Louisiana outlawed carrying concealed weapons for personal defense, and several states followed suit. However, Mississippi, Missouri and other states affirmed individuals’ rights to carry arms for self-defense.

Some colleges also began prohibiting firearms on campus. College students often exhibited unruly behavior, even rioting, to protest certain rules or punishments. For instance, students at the College of William and Mary rioted in 1807 after professors...
punished two students for dueling. The University of Virginia board on Oct. 4, 1824, ruled that students would not be allowed to “keep or use weapons or arms of any kind.”

Other schools established similar rules. In 1868, Yale University barred students from keeping “any kind of firearms, fireworks or gunpowder” or firing “in or near the College yard, or near the dwelling-house or person of any member of the Faculty.”

The rules did not always temper students’ behavior. At Virginia, students each November celebrated the so-called 1836 military company riot, which they interpreted as “a victory over professorial authority,” by firing their pistols, setting off firecrackers, lighting fires and in general “caterwauling.” During the celebration in 1840, law professor John A.G. Davis was fatally shot when he tried to quell the ruckus.

In the mid-1800s, many colleges sought to control student behavior under a doctrine, upheld by the courts, known as in loco parentis — or “in the parents’ place” — based on a British common law granting a tutor or schoolmaster parental authority over a child.

Still, not all universities barred firearms. During the 1880s, the University of Kentucky in Lexington had 176 rules governing student behavior, ranging from mandating that students walk in a soldier-like manner to barring them from visiting a saloon. However, students could have guns in their rooms and occasionally “the relative tranquility of the campus was broken by the sound of gun shots originating from the windows of the men’s dormitory,” according to a history of the university.

The National Rifle Association, formed in 1871 to improve the marksmanship of citizens who might serve in the military, began holding target shooting competitions and sponsoring gun clubs and shooting ranges, including on college campuses. And in 1926 it helped devise a model Uniform Firearms Act to encourage states to license citizens wanting to carry a concealed handgun.

Through the early 20th century, colleges and universities grew in size and number, and drunken carousing became an ever more common part of campus life as rules on social decorum eased. Social historian David O. Levine wrote, “The American public expected a new elite of college students to prove their status by misbehaving in ritualized ways.”

Campus Protests

In the 1960s, students pushed for additional freedoms on campus, but the period also saw a widespread crackdown on the possession of firearms on college campuses.

Political fervor opposing the Vietnam War and favoring civil rights spread across campuses nationwide, and a growing number of violent incidents began to occur — some related to the protests and some not.

At the University of Texas on Aug. 1, 1966, Charles Whitman, 25, an engineering student and ex-Marine, carried three rifles, two pistols and a sawed-off shotgun to the top of a tower and “launched an orgy of sniping,” in the words of the New York Daily News, in which 14 died and 32 were wounded. Students, professors and visitors sought cover behind trees, in stairwells and under desks until “police burst into the sniper’s 28th-story eyrie and shot him dead after a brief gun duel.”

An autopsy revealed that Whitman suffered from a glioblastoma brain tumor. The previous March he had sought psychiatric treatment at the student health center, where he received an hour’s session and was told to return within a week and to call if he had concerns in the meantime. He never returned or called.

After an investigation, a medical panel recommended the university implement a mental health program and counseling service for students because the college years are “one of the most stressful periods” in a student’s life.

Two years later, the assassinations of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and Democratic senator and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 spurred passage of the Gun Control Act, barring individuals who have been “adjudicated as a mental defective” or “committed to a mental institution” from buying or possessing firearms.

In April 1969, more than 80 members of the Afro-American Society at Cornell University occupied the student union, demanding improved mental-health services for minority students and more minority faculty and professors sensitive to black perspectives. Fearing for their safety, they subsequently sneaked 15 firearms into the building. Administrators agreed to negotiate with the
protesters and allowed them to leave the building armed to ensure their safety — a move some later criticized as an embarrassing capitulation to physical intimidation. Soon after the incident, the New York State Legislature banned guns on campuses.57

As student protests spread around the nation, courts began to recognize the constitutional rights of university students, “sounding the death knell for in loco parentis,” said Philip Lee, an associate law professor at the University of the District of Columbia.58 Even so, colleges began to restrict guns on campus.59

In 1970, the University of Colorado banned guns on campus, allowing students to store their hunting rifles in lockers with the campus police. Generally only a handful of students did so.60 The same year, National Guardsmen in Ohio who were called to quell an anti-war protest shot and killed four students at Kent State University. Many students subsequently began protesting the presence of armed officers on campuses, and at the University of Kentucky, faculty and students unsuccessfully demanded that police and guardsmen, called to calm riots after the Kent State shootings, not carry “weapons of violence” while on campus.61

Nationwide, campus safety became a growing concern, particularly after Jeanne Ann Clery, a 19-year-old freshman asleep in her dorm room at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., was beaten, raped and strangled by a fellow student in 1986. When Clery’s parents discovered that 38 violent crimes had occurred at the university in the previous three years, they successfully sued Lehigh for not disclosing details about campus crime to prospective students.

Congress passed the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act in 1990 (later renamed the Jeanne Clery Act), which requires colleges and universities to maintain a public crime log. Congress amended the law in 2008, in part to require schools to provide details about crimes adjacent to campus.62

Also in 1990, Congress passed the Gun-Free School Zones Act, barring any individual from knowingly carrying or discharging a firearm near a primary or secondary school. The law primarily was a reaction to several mass shootings at schools, including one at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, Calif., which left five children dead and another 30 students and teachers wounded.63

The law later was challenged in court for exceeding its constitutional powers under the Commerce Clause. By the time the Supreme Court struck it down in 1995, Congress had replaced it in 1994 with the Gun-Free Schools Act, which called on states receiving federal education funds to adopt “zero-tolerance” policies regarding weapons in schools.54

Although the 1994 law did not apply to colleges and universities, states subsequently passed similar legislation making higher-ed campuses gun-free zones.

Campus Violence

The late 1990s was a particularly violent time at colleges and universities as well as at lower-level schools and across the nation in general. Gun-control advocates and their opponents, led by the NRA, had been arguing about whether restricting firearms would improve or worsen crime statistics.

When a 1993 study published in The New England Journal of Medicine concluded that keeping a gun in the home increased the risk of homicide, gun-rights advocates campaigned to eliminate federal funding for such studies.65

Ultimately, Congress included a provision — written by then-Rep. Jay Dickey, R-Ark. — in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997 prohibiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from using funds earmarked for injury prevention and control to be used “to advocate or promote gun control.” This was interpreted to mean that the CDC was prohibited from issuing grants for studies about gun violence.66

Subsequent studies were largely based on data collected by the FBI and reports issued pursuant to the Clery Act. In 1998, according to one study, 20 murders, 1,240 rapes and 2,267 aggravated assaults were reported on the campuses of four-year higher education institutions.67

In 2003, the Colorado Legislature enacted the Concealed Carry Act, which allowed permitted gun owners to carry their weapons throughout the state except in government buildings, in K-12 schools (except in locked cars) and on private property where owners had barred weapons. Although House lawmakers had defeated an amendment to exempt higher education institutions, Colorado Attorney General
## CHRONOLOGY

### 1960s-1990s
Violence on and off campus leads to new gun restrictions.

**1966** Sniper at University of Texas kills 14, injures 32.

**1968** Congress passes Gun Control Act that regulates interstate commerce of firearms.

**1969** Armed members of the Afro-American Society at Cornell University occupying the student union force university to negotiate demands of minority students. New York Legislature bans guns on college campuses.

**1970** University of Colorado bans guns on campuses, allows hunting rifles to be stored in lockers with campus police.

**1990** Congress adopts so-called Clery Act, which mandates that colleges report campus crimes. Gun-Free School Zones Act designates primary and secondary schools as “gun-free zones.” States later adopt similar legislation for their public colleges and universities.

**1999** Two students at Columbine High School in Colorado shoot and kill 12 classmates and a teacher before committing suicide, triggering crackdowns on guns on campuses.

### 2000s-Present
High-profile mass shootings spark new strategies on campus firearms.

**2003** Colorado allows concealed weapons statewide, including on college campuses, but not K-12 schools.

**2004** Utah becomes first state to allow licensed adult students and employees to carry guns on campus.

**2006** Utah Supreme Court strikes down University of Utah ban on guns on campus.


**2008** Student at Northern Illinois University shoots and kills five people and wounds 21 before committing suicide. The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus forms to fight campus-carry laws. U.S. Supreme Court rules unconstitutional District of Columbia law barring residents from keeping guns in homes, but says right to bear arms is not unlimited.

**2009** Arizona allows concealed guns on campus if stored in cars. Michigan State University permits concealed guns on campus but not inside buildings.

**2011** Mississippi and Wisconsin pass campus concealed-carry laws. Virginia Supreme Court upholds George Mason University’s ban on firearms.

**2012** Colorado Supreme Court strikes down University of Colorado’s ban on firearms. Shooter kills 26 people at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., triggering calls for more guns on campuses.

**2013** Kansas allows concealed guns at public universities and colleges, effective summer 2017. Arkansas follows suit but allows full-time employees at universities to carry concealed weapons but schools can opt out.

**2014** Idaho allows concealed weapons on campus. Student opens fire at Florida State University library, injuring three students before being shot by campus police.

**2015** Texas says public universities and colleges must allow concealed firearms on campus. Student at an Oregon community college shoots nine people before committing suicide, prompting then-GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump to advocate arming college faculty. California reaffirms ban on concealed weapons at public colleges.

**2016** Knife and car attack at Ohio State University injures 11 before campus police kill perpetrator. Ohio allows concealed firearms at colleges, day-care centers, public areas of airports and some government buildings. Tennessee allows public colleges and universities to permit faculty and staff to carry concealed handguns. Florida Senate leader blocks bill to allow concealed weapons on campuses. Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal vetoes campus-carry bill. Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., permits concealed firearms in residence halls. Three University of Texas professors sue university and the state for right to bar firearms from classrooms. Missouri takes up broad gun legislation, ultimately removes provision that would have allowed full-time employees on college campuses to carry guns.
Arming Campus Cops Spurs Controversy

“We don’t support the militarization of campus security.”

With high-profile shootings occurring more frequently on college campuses and gun ownership in the United States rising, more universities and colleges are arming campus police with handguns, rifles and, in some places, semi-automatic weapons.

“The more the public gets to arm, the more an institution has to come to grips with upgrading to an armed force,” says Sue Riseling, executive director of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, a West Hartford, Conn.-based trade group representing officers at about 1,105 colleges in 10 countries.

Not everyone, however, agrees with arming campus police, particularly with semi-automatic rifles or what some call “military-grade” weaponry. “If law enforcement is armed on campus, we [believe] the training they receive should be commensurate with municipal law enforcement,” says Andy Pelosi, executive director of Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, a national organization that works with colleges and universities to oppose new so-called campus-carry laws, which allow students to carry concealed weapons on campus. But “we don’t support the militarization of campus security.”

Educational institutions vary widely on whether to have “security officers” or sworn law enforcement personnel with the same training and authority as municipal police, says Gene Deisinger, managing partner and co-founder of SIGMA Threat Management Associates, an Alexandria, Va., firm that advises colleges and universities on security. Some state laws restrict whether police on public campuses can be armed.

After the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting in which 32 people died, a national organization of city police chiefs and the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics devised guidelines for better coordinating campus security and local law enforcement. The guidelines didn’t mention arming campus security, but by 2012, as campus enrollments increased and fears about crime and mass shootings rose, many more higher education institutions had taken that route, according to the Justice Department.

During the 2011-12 school year about 75 percent of public, four-year institutions with more than 2,500 students were using armed officers — up from 68 percent in the 2004-05 school year. Most campus officers were conducting joint patrols with local law enforcement.1

And universities have continued to arm campus police despite student protests. At Oregon’s Portland State University, students have protested a 2014 decision by the Board of Trustees to arm campus police.2 “It doesn’t make me feel any safer knowing that there are more guns on a massively populated campus,” said 23-year-old sociology major Cody Shotola.3

The next year, Princeton University, responding to a series of deadly shootings around the country, said its public safety officers would have access to rifles — a move the university’s student government had battled since 2008.4

Local, state and university law enforcement agencies can purchase excess military weaponry from the Defense Department. Between 2006 and April 2014, the Pentagon distributed 79,288 assault rifles, 11,959 bayonets and hundreds of helicopters and mine-resistant vehicles to local police departments across the United States, a portion of which went to colleges. More than 100 colleges have participated in the program in recent years.5

City police sometimes object to arming campus officers, particularly with semi-automatic rifles. For instance, the Boston Police Department condemned a decision by Northeastern University to arm campus police with such weapons.

Ken Salazar said at the time the University of Colorado could retain its weapons ban based on a Board of Regents policy that guns are “offensive” to the university’s “values.”68

The University of Utah continued to prohibit concealed carry until the Legislature in 2004 clarified that a 1995 statute authorizing anyone with a concealed-carry permit to carry at any public “school” applied to public higher-education.69 In September 2006, the state Supreme Court struck down the university’s ban.70

In states that continued to prohibit weapons on campus, it was unclear how many students abided by the restrictions. Researchers at the Harvard School of
"I can remember having a dialogue not long ago about whether [college police officers] should be carrying handguns," Boston Police Commissioner Bill Evans said. "Now we're talking about ... whether they should have patrol rifles. Obviously, I don't think they're necessary. We can be on those campuses within five or six minutes. We're highly trained."

But Northeastern spokesman Matthew McDonald said the vast majority of active shooter situations are over in less than five minutes, and "a quarter of them in less than two minutes. Proximity — with our department and officers being located on campus — is critical to response time."

Deisinger defends military-grade equipment for campus cops. "We're talking about front-line officers and detectives being able to respond and neutralize threats," such as the incident at Ohio State in November when campus police killed the suspect in a knife attack. "So the best weapon [to do that] changes with the scenario. In some scenarios, it might be a handgun at close range. But for down the hallway or across an open campus yard, a rifle is a much better weapon."

Besides, he says, civilians can obtain military-grade weapons at their local sporting goods store. "So if civilians, including the potential perpetrators, can have access to those weapons," he says, it would be "foolish" to prevent campus police officers from having those same weapons.

With many students living off campus in nearby communities, jurisdictional issues can further complicate campus policing. "It's very challenging," for campus police officers, said Robin Hattersley, executive editor of Campus Safety magazine. "I don't think it's straightforward at all."

As of 2010-11, most campuses were conducting joint patrols with local law enforcement, according to the Department of Justice, and 70 percent of campus security agencies have written agreements on coordinating with city law enforcement in handling off-campus threats and crime. The Major City Police Chiefs Association and the Bureau of Justice encourage such coordination. With many students living off campus in nearby communities, jurisdictional issues can further complicate campus policing. "It's very challenging," for campus police officers, said Robin Hattersley, executive editor of Campus Safety magazine. "I don't think it's straightforward at all."

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However, some off-campus actions by campus police have led to community tensions. Protests erupted, for instance, after a white University of Cincinnati police officer in July 2015 fatally shot an unarmed black man after a traffic stop about a half-mile from campus. The officer, Ray Tensing, was fired and charged with homicide for killing Samuel DuBose, 43, whom Tensing had pulled over for missing a front license plate. Tensing's trial last November ended in a mistrial, but the prosecutor has said he will retry the former officer.

PUBLIC HEALTH reported in 2002 that 4.3 percent of the more than 10,000 undergraduate students at 119 four-year colleges reported having a firearm at school. And the gun carriers were more likely, the report said, to be males, living off campus and who binge drink and "engage in risky and aggressive behavior after drinking."

In November 2006, while investigating the shooting of a homeless man in an alley behind several fraternity houses at Oregon State University in Corvallis, police found more than two dozen guns — .22-caliber rifles and 12- and 20-gauge shotguns — at the Alpha Gamma Rho house and in members’ cars — including the weapon used to shoot the homeless man.72

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8 Reaves, op. cit., p. 1.
Officials Struggle to Prevent Campus Massacres

"Privacy and concealed-carry laws make the job harder."

Those on all sides of the debate on whether to allow concealed firearms on campus agree on one thing: They want to prevent another shooting like the 2007 massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Va., by a student with a history of depression.

But threat assessment experts, college counselors and many professors say legalizing firearms isn’t the solution. They say it only diverts attention from the more complicated factors involved in keeping students safe during a time when more and more college students are reporting mental health concerns.

“I never believed the status for or against concealed carry would make that much of a difference” in deterring threats, says Gene Deisinger, managing partner and co-founder of SIGMA Threat Management Associates, an Alexandria, Va., firm that provides training on violence prevention. He says it doesn’t matter in general whether any individual can carry a gun legally. “My question is, does this person pose a threat?”

Still, as James DiTulio, director of Western Illinois University’s counseling center, says, “Predicting someone is going to become violent, that is very hard to do.”

Both he and Deisinger, who also is a mental health expert, worry about making firearms more available on campus without improving mental health services.

A 2015 survey of college counseling centers found that 47.3 percent of students seeking counseling are diagnosed with anxiety, 40.1 percent suffer from depression and 26.1 percent were already taking psychotropic medications. Those percentages were up from 2007, when 36.7 percent of students were diagnosed with anxiety, 39.4 percent with depression and 24 percent were taking medications.

Christopher Corbett, president of the American College Counseling Association, warns that research does not show a direct connection between mental illness and gun violence. He says he is far more concerned about the “huge number of people” on campus who are stressed and depressed and “thinking about hurting themselves all the time.”

Lucinda Roy, who was chair of the Virginia Tech English Department before the massacre, warns that while professors see increasing despair among students, “mental illness of itself is not aggressive,” and all people with mental illnesses are not “homicidal maniacs.”

Other counselors and safety experts agree, and note that those assessing a potential threat must examine behavior that might indicate an individual is troubled and needs attention — either from mental health counselors or law enforcement officials — in order to prevent the person from harming himself or others.

The Virginia Tech shooter, Seung-Hui Cho, had written “dark, very threatening” material in his creative writing classes, sometimes had exhibited "bizarre" behavior and had a history of depression before enrolling at the university, according to Dr. Bella Sood, a psychiatrist at Virginia Commonwealth University who was appointed by then Gov. Tim Kaine to assess what happened prior to the shooting. Before the shooting, Roy had recommended that Cho seek counseling, and she reached out to various campus administrators. Other students and teachers also had expressed concerns about his behavior, she recalled in her 2009 book, No Right to Remain Silent. But communication among campus officials was uncoordinated, and the university had no procedures for reporting concerns to one centralized resource. A misunderstanding of privacy laws also interfered with information sharing, Deisinger says.

Further, disability and privacy laws barred Roy from forcing Cho to seek counseling. And while later reports

Campus-Carry Laws

The April 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech reignited the debate about firearms on campus.

The night after the shooting, Chris Brown, a political science student at the University of North Texas, formed Students for Concealed Carry on Campus to push for relaxing the rules against concealed weapons on campus. Gun-rights organizations such as Gun Owners of America also urged universities to change their policies.

“No one can say for sure if allowing students and faculty members to carry arms would have prevented the rampage on Monday,” said Philip Van Cleave, president
revealed his history of depression, institutions are barred from taking action against a student based only on a known or perceived mental health issue.4

Roy believes communication on the Virginia Tech campus has been much improved since then.

“The support services [today] are much more visible and much more explicit,” Roy says. “You know when you need to go to someone, and if you’re sensible you know when you are out of your depth, and you try to get people in to help.”

Universities and colleges began improving threat assessment processes after a 2010 federal study concluded that between 1900 and 2008, 272 violent incidents were reported on or near college campuses, and the perpetrators had “demonstrated behaviors and/or communicated information to others that indicated that they were on a pathway toward violence.” But, in many cases, no one observing the behaviors knew whom they could or should tell, according to the report.5

Now, “it is highly likely that a centralized process would enable the gathering of much of the available information” about an individual, such as reports from other students, colleagues, professors or other administrators, says Deisinger, who was hired as deputy chief of police and director of threat management services for Virginia Tech after the shooting. He also helped develop guidelines for other colleges on how to devise threat assessment plans and teams, which include representatives from various departments and designate a single person to collect information, alerts and reports about troubled students.

New concealed-carry laws specifically bar universities from knowing the identities of gun owners who are legally bringing weapons onto campus. In Colorado, for instance, only a law enforcement officer or judge, if they have a reason to be concerned about an individual’s behavior, can access that information, says Pat O’Rourke, vice president and university counsel at the University of Colorado.

Sue Riseling, executive director of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, says concealed-carry laws make safety officers’ jobs even harder. She warns: “What you need in order to carry” out a shooting is an ability and an opportunity. Campus-carry laws now provide individuals with the ability, she says.

— Christina L. Lyons

Seung-Hui Cho, 23, an undergraduate at Virginia Tech, killed 32 students and professors at the school on April 16, 2007, before turning his gun on himself.

of the pro-gun Virginia Citizens Defense League. “But they wouldn’t die like sheep, at least, but more like a wolf with some fangs, able to fight back.”75

The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a nonprofit group that advocates for gun control, responded: “If the educational community does not respond, this type of legislation may well be enacted in more and more states.”76

The following November, Students for Concealed Carry sponsored 110 “empty holster” demonstrations on public campuses nationwide. “Historically speaking, there hasn’t been a single no-gun sign, law or campus

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policy that has saved a single life,” said a press release announcing the protests.77

The group’s efforts gained momentum after the 2008 shooting at Northern Illinois University by Kazmierczak, who had bought two empty magazines and a holster through the website of the same company where Cho had bought one of his guns. The owner later offered student discounts on more than 5,400 kinds of firearms.78

After the Illinois shooting, the NRA adopted model campus-carry legislation, called the Campus Personal Protection Act.79 That year students opposed to loosening restrictions formed the Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus. The Association of State Colleges and Universities and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement also opposed campus-carry policies.80

Between 2008 and 2010, more than a dozen states introduced campus-carry bills.81 Most were defeated, but several states began to reconsider as courts began to favor gun rights. The Supreme Court’s 2008 ruling in D.C. v. Heller striking down Washington, D.C.’s law barring gun ownership, for instance, overturned the high court’s 1939 ruling in U.S. v. Miller, that the Second Amendment referred only to militia members.82

In 2011, the Virginia Supreme Court upheld George Mason University’s gun ban, while the Oregon Court of Appeals overturned the Oregon University System’s ban on guns. In March 2012, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado’s policy banning guns from campus violated the state’s concealed-carry law.83 More recently, a Florida district court of appeals in 2015 upheld the University of Florida’s ban on guns on its campus and in dorm rooms.84

After the 2012 massacre at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, both sides of the gun control debate ramped up their lobbying efforts, and President Barack Obama in 2013 ordered that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resume research on the causes of gun violence. But Congress repeatedly rejected his request for funds for such research.85

Almost all those laws exempted schools, colleges and public buildings from places where a concealed firearm could be carried. But that was about to change in some states.86

In 2013, Kansas legalized concealed carry on campuses but allowed colleges and universities to prohibit firearms in buildings with “adequate security measures.” That law is scheduled to take effect this July. Arkansas also enacted a law in 2013 allowing faculty to carry firearms unless an institution’s governing board specifically bars it.87 In 2015, California reaffirmed its ban on concealed weapons at public colleges and universities.

In 2016, Liberty University expanded its concealed-carry firearms policy to allow handguns to be kept in safes inside dormitories.88

CURRENT SITUATION

States Act

As the spring legislative season ramps up, lawmakers and university officials are again preparing to consider whether to permit concealed firearms on campus. Several measures are expected to be more likely to be adopted in light of GOP election victories in 2016.

In Florida, for example, voters elected nine House members to the state Senate who support loosening gun restrictions, and voted out Republican Sen. Miguel de La Portilla, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, who blocked a campus-carry measure last year. The new chairman, Republican Sen. Greg Steube, had sponsored last session’s bill as a House member.89

And in states where legislatures have begun to loosen laws, lawmakers hope to go further. For example, Tennessee state Rep. Andy Holt, who sponsored the law that allows faculty to carry guns, said — echoing Trump — “ultimately, I would like to see 100 percent removal of all gun-free zones in public places.”90

Members of the Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus say some legislatures have limited their involvement in the debate. In Florida House hearings last year, for instance, witnesses were limited to one minute each, says Kathryn Grant, director of state affairs for the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus. “Without fully vetting a policy like this, how can anyone come to a conclusion responsibly?” she asks.

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More than 420 colleges and universities in 42 states have joined the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus. Parents also have begun to make their wishes known. The Texas chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, lobbied against that state’s campus-carry law, saying, “College life is already rife with academic pressures, alcohol and drug abuse; forcing schools to introduce guns into the mix is dangerous and doesn’t make sense.”

Meanwhile, a fight is expected in Kansas over the 2013 law colleges are expected to implement in July. Many opponents contend the expense of installing metal detectors and security guards at every entrance — which the law requires in order for a gun to be barred from a building — is prohibitive. One community college estimated that would cost $20 million.

Yet, given the long-held Republican majorities in the state Legislature, the policy is unlikely to change. Bob Beatty, a political science professor at Washburn University, said Kansas lawmakers support the idea of “allow guns everywhere, and if somebody does start shooting the place up, hopefully someone will have a gun and shoot them.”

But Newbern, of Students for Concealed Carry, says, “Lawmakers are seeing that campus concealed carry isn’t causing blood to flow in the street the way the opposition makes it sound. And so they’re like, why are we telling these young adults they can’t do what they’re allowed to do off campus?”

Nevertheless, he says he doubts many Ohio universities will opt into that state’s new law. Ohio State University President Michael Drake has said only trained professionals should carry firearms on campus.

The OSU attack last fall prompted gun-rights supporters to raise concerns about terrorism, since the White House announced that the attacker, a Somali refugee, may have been motivated “by a desire to carry out an act of terrorism.”

Court Act

The lawsuit by three University of Texas professors against the state and university is pending, although a federal judge in August rejected their plea to temporarily block the law. The professors said they fear “robust academic debate” won’t happen for fear it could erupt into “gun violence.”

The Texas law directs institutions to devise “reasonable rules” to implement the law without actually prohibiting campus carry, says Jeffery L. Graves, associate vice president for legal affairs at the university’s Austin campus. Balancing the law’s directives with a low desire on campus for handguns, the university barred guns in laboratories with hazardous chemicals due to safety concerns, he says. As in many other states, Texas law allows the university to bar firearms from sporting events and buildings hosting pre-K-12 programs.

But the university did not bar firearms from classrooms. “That would prohibit the biggest demographic — students — from carrying on campus,” Graves says, noting that most students commute to campus and take public transportation because parking is limited. Without a car to store their weapon in while in class, he says, barring guns from the classroom would mean barring them from campus.

Newbern, of Students for Concealed Carry, says logistics make it difficult to permit guns in some areas on a campus and not in others. For instance, several states require concealed firearms to be stored in locked vehicles while on campus, he says, making them unavailable for self-protection.

Some professors are concerned that students visiting their offices might be armed. Gonzalez at the University of Houston says some students tend to get angry during advisory sessions with a professor — sometimes to the point where the professor is tempted to call security. “Students are under a lot of stress, and especially when they are being advised,” she says.

The University of Texas permits faculty and staff with “sole occupant offices” to bar concealed firearms provided they give “oral notice” and arrange to meet gun-carrying students elsewhere. The policy also bans weapons during formal student or faculty disciplinary hearings.

But Newbern says his group will file a complaint if any Texas professor otherwise bars firearms from their
Would legalizing guns on campus make colleges safer?

**YES**

Michael Newbern  
Assistant Director of Public Relations,  
Students for Concealed Carry

Written for CQ Researcher, January 2017

Our best and brightest congregate on college campuses to solve some of the world’s most pressing problems and to prepare to do the same after they leave school. We want them to be able to focus on their work free of worry for their safety.

College campuses generally are safer than the areas surrounding them. Campus crime rates are extremely low, and not just when compared to the general population. But this isn’t just about college campuses.

We don’t spend all of our day on campus. We spend part of the day, including early mornings and late nights, off campus, where criminals have the upper hand. That’s why any college safety program encourages students to travel in numbers at those times. And when we ban concealed guns on campus, we disarm lawfully licensed students, faculty or staff members from the time they leave home until they return.

The question for us isn’t whether legalizing guns on campus would make campus safer; it’s answering why we’re treated differently on college campuses? If we’re lawfully permitted to carry our licensed, concealed handgun to the movie theater on Friday night, why are we not allowed to carry it to class on Friday before the movie? If we’re lawfully permitted to carry our handgun to the public municipal library, why are we not allowed to do so at the public university library? If we’re lawfully permitted to carry our licensed, concealed handgun to the mall food court, why are we not permitted to do so in the campus dining hall? Why are we treated differently on campus? Is it because we’re students?

Research conducted by economist John Lott Jr., author of *More Guns, Less Crime*, has found that gun licensees 21 to 25 years of age do not commit weapons crimes at higher rates than the general population. That can’t be it.

Is it because we’re somehow more prone to violence on campus? The University of Texas at Austin’s campus-carry working group published a report showing that not a single intentional act of violence has ever been carried out by a licensee with a firearm on a college campus. That can’t be it either.

So, if campus carry may or may not make a campus safer, but definitely won’t make it less safe, what justification is there to ban it?

**NO**

Andy Pelosi  
Executive Director, Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus

Written for CQ Researcher, January 2017

The vast majority of colleges want to keep campuses gun free for good reason, yet we are witnessing a pro-gun movement that promotes legislation to force colleges and universities to allow loaded, concealed guns on campus.

Our postsecondary institutions are some of the safest places in the country. For example, a 2001 U.S. Department of Education study found that the overall homicide rate at postsecondary education institutions was less than 1 person per 100,000 students. By comparison, the homicide rate in the United States overall was 5.7 people per 100,000 persons, and 14.1 per 100,000 for persons ages 17 to 29. A 2005 Department of Justice study found that 93 percent of violent crimes that victimize college students occur off campus.

The early adult years are among the most unstable periods in a person’s life. Several circumstances coalesce to create high-stress situations for college and university students. These situations are far likelier to become dangerous, and even fatal, when firearms are present. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, suicide is the second-leading cause of death, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other factors characteristic of college students — such as increasing rates of sexual assault, drug and alcohol abuse, impulsivity and mental health problems — are widely recognized vulnerabilities that, combined with an increased presence of firearms, could increase the risk of violence.

Allowing concealed weapons on campus would not only increase the risk of violence but also impose an unfunded mandate on colleges, which would need to purchase new equipment, hire more security and provide training. In addition, campus law enforcement opposes campus-carry laws, and most permit holders lack the frequent and ongoing tactical training needed to use deadly force in the event of an active shooter. And legislators are not in the best position to assess the health and safety needs of every campus community.

Finally, supporters of guns on campus often cite the Second Amendment as the cornerstone for their right to carry concealed weapons on campus. The late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, in writing the opinion for *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which backed the right to possess firearms in the home for self-defense, went out of his way to reaffirm the legality of laws restricting carrying weapons in sensitive places such as schools.
offices. “Professors can’t willy nilly ban firearms in their offices,” he says. “Professors don’t own their offices. The state owns that property.”

**Shooting Clubs**

Some gun-control advocates worry about a recent surge in interest in collegiate shooting teams. “We literally have way more students interested than we can handle,” said Steve Goldstein, one of MIT’s pistol coaches.

According to the NRA, nearly 300 U.S. colleges and universities have shooting programs. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, a firearms lobbying group, has awarded more than $1 million in grants since 2009 to start about 80 programs.

Meanwhile, Liberty University plans to open a shooting range on campus next fall as part of its “commitment to promote gun ownership and firearm sports.”

One University of Delaware student told FoxNews.com that classmates think club members are “crazy gun kids” who intend to “shoot up the school.”

Stewart of Florida Students for Campus Carry is on the University of Florida Action Shooting Team, whose membership fluctuates from about eight to 20. As a team member, he says, he trains regularly and feels he is better trained in firearm tactics than most citizens and thus could handle a violent situation.

“So I see it as my duty” to carry in areas where it is permitted, he says.

**Limiting Research**

Hemenway of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center says the 1997 law that clamped down on CDC research on gun violence continues to limit research on the topic.

The American Medical Association urged Congress last year to resume gun research funding, but House Republicans rebuffed Democrats’ efforts to remove the budget amendment that has frozen most research into gun violence since 1997.

Nevertheless, the Harvard center, with limited funds, is analyzing the level of gun training needed to get a concealed carry permit; when, how and where gun holders’ weapons are stolen; and the connection, if any, between the number of guns, gun laws and killings of and by police.

Since May 2015, Garen Wintemute, a professor at the University of California, Davis, has been leading a study on whether gun owners with a history of alcohol and drug convictions are more likely to commit violence than gun owners without such a history. Funding for that research, provided by the National Institutes of Health, continues through April.

California has appropriated $5 million over five years for a new firearm violence research center at UC Davis. The center, announced by UC President Janet Napolitano in August, plans to offer grants for research projects and increase philanthropic support for such research.

**OUTLOOK**

**Complicated Issue**

Gun rights supporters hailed Trump’s election as a victory for measures to loosen restrictions on guns.

For instance, Trump has said he supports a national right to carry concealed firearms, enabling those with concealed-handgun permits in one state to be able to carry firearms in all other states, potentially enabling more students and visitors at university campuses eligible to carry.

Trump supports allowing adults at elementary and secondary schools to carry guns. But he cannot unilaterally dismantle all gun-free zones, said George Washington University law professor Robert Cottrol, because the zones were established by various federal, state and local laws. “School gun-free zones would have to be changed by an act of Congress,” Cottrol said.

Still, others believe much more research needs to be done on the effect of campus-carry laws. “What you need is a lot of studies looking at the issue from different angles,” says Hemenway, of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center.

“We need to bring in experts” in education, campus security and mental health, along with students and parents, to thoroughly review the effect of campus-carry policies, says Grant, of the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus.

It is unclear what effect campus carry will have on the ability of public universities to retain faculty, as well as students, Grant says. Some students might want to
switch to a private campus that does not allow guns, she says, but for many students a public university is the most affordable.

“This year and next year these campuses will go to conceal carry [rules] . . . and I really hope it keeps people safe. But in the next five to seven years, the buildup of firearms will be there,” says Riseling of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. She fears an increase in both suicides and homicides.

“This is a multilayered issue and it’s complicated,” she says. “Campuses have these unique environments” with a higher concentration of young people than are typically found in other communities.

Deisinger, the former director of threat management at Virginia Tech, says he has seen the debate over gun control fluctuate over the years, and even the debate over campus carry, which arose 20 years ago but was drowned out by other issues. “We’ll continue to talk about these issues . . . but . . . it will continue to be largely unresolved just because there are competing goals, and what satisfies one interest compromises another.”

Lott, of the Crime Prevention Research Center, says, “As more states adopt these laws, . . . people are going to see that the concerns are not that credible. Gradually more and more states will adopt them and the arguments will become weaker.”

Kreuter of North Carolina says he has seen mass shootings become “more inevitable” than he would like, but says instead of focusing on guns, greater attention should be paid to mental health care, both on campuses and in the general population.

“I don’t want to work at a place where students are carrying guns,” he says. Nevertheless, “if students are potentially armed, then I’ll be armed as well. That’s my resignation, in part, to where this has gone.”

NOTES

4. For more information, see Christina L. Lyons, “Reforming Juvenile Justice,” CQ Researcher, Sept. 11, 2015, pp. 745-768.


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53. For background, see Peter Katel, “Crime on Campus,” CQ Researcher, Feb. 4, 2011, pp. 97-120.


58. Lee, op. cit., p. 70; Katel, op. cit.

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Books

A professor in the global affairs department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, analyzes the link between gun violence — particularly mass shootings — and campus gun regulations.

A vice chancellor of student affairs at the University of Mississippi (LaBanc) and the former president of West Virginia State University (Hemphill) compile essays on the history of campus violence and firearms legislation, plus strategies for colleges and universities to prevent violence on campus.

A political science professor at the State University of New York, Cortland, explores the history of gun regulation in the United States.

Articles

Two criminal justice professors review case law, social science findings and public policy perspectives relevant to the debate on whether concealed firearms should be allowed on college campuses.

A Georgia Tech professor says many university administrators and staff worry that allowing firearms on campuses will add to the stresses of college life.

Lawmakers are debating a bill that would give concealed-weapons permit holders the right to carry their guns on college campuses in Florida, which saw the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history at an Orlando nightclub in 2016.

A reporter examines a growing trend of campus police departments: obtaining semiautomatic rifles through a U.S. Department of Defense program that distributes excess military equipment.

A reporter profiles University of Texas students from both sides of the debate regarding the state law permitting concealed firearms on campus.

A journalist examines the rise of Students for Concealed Carry, a nationwide organization pushing for laws and policies to permit concealed carry of firearms on college campuses.

Mental health experts discuss the potential link between mental illness and gun violence.

Reports and Studies

Three criminal justice professors survey 1,889 community college faculty from 18 states and find that the majority do not support allowing students, faculty or visitors to carry concealed firearms on their campus.
Policy analysts detail state legislative actions and policy decisions of higher education institutions related to firearms on campus.

Eights Johns Hopkins University professors and others summarize research and data on gun violence, gun regulations and mental health and behavior of college-age students. Their conclusion: Allowing concealed firearms makes college and university campuses less safe.

For More Information

**American College Counseling Association**, 1101 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis, IN 46202; 855-220-8760; collegecounseling.org. Trade association for mental health professionals and students who work in counseling.

**Crime Prevention Research Center**, 212 Lafayette Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081; 484-802-5373, crimeresearch.org. Nonprofit research organization that argues having more guns on campuses would make them safer.


**Harvard Injury Control Research Center**, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115; 617-495-1000. Education and research center that provides research on firearms, youth violence and suicide.

**International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators**, 342 N. Main St., West Hartford, CT 06117-2507; 860-586-7517; www.iaclea.org. International trade association representing law enforcement officers at colleges and universities; provides research and advocacy on campus public safety.

**Students for Concealed Carry**, concealedcampus.org. Nonprofit advocacy group of students and faculty who support concealed firearms on campuses.

**The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus**, PO Box 658, Croton Falls, NY 10519; 914-629-6726; keepgunsoffcampus.org. Tracks state laws and court cases.

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