

**2018 Imagine RIT Survey Results:
Perceptions of Gun Policies**
May 2018

Working Paper #2018-05



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Introduction

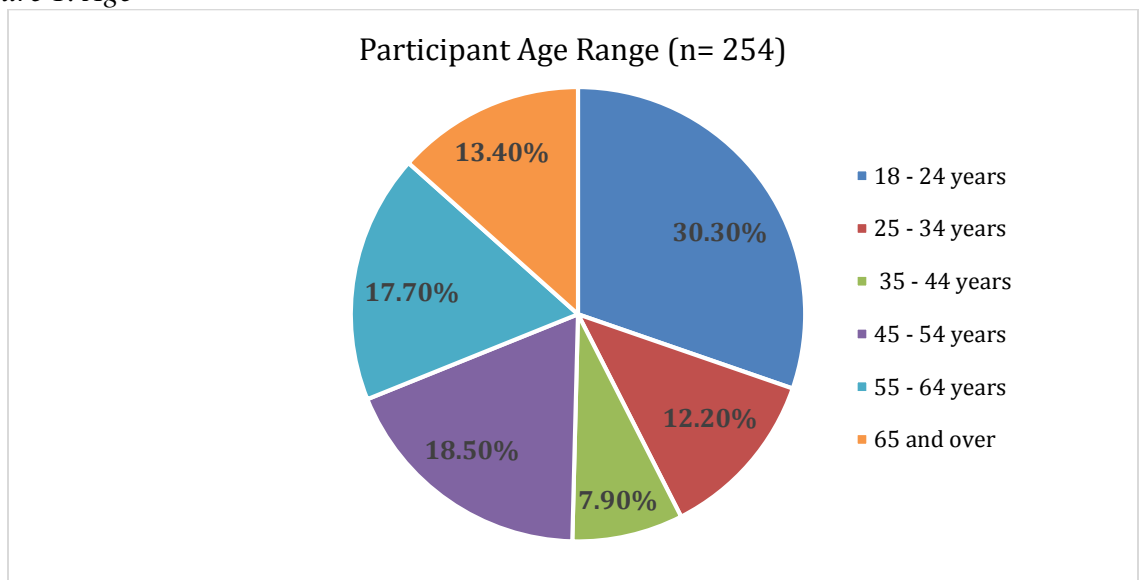
Since 2007, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) has hosted an annual innovation and creativity festival: Imagine RIT. Imagine RIT is a campus-wide event that showcases the work of RIT students, staff, and faculty through interactive presentations, exhibits, and projects¹. The approximately 200,000 festival attendees primarily include local residents, college students, and their families. On April 28th, 2018 RIT held the 11th annual Imagine RIT festival.

Every year, the Center for Public Safety Initiatives (CPSI) at RIT develops and distributes a survey to the festival participants that visit the CPSI booth. Survey topics are pertinent to current criminal justice issues, and past topics include perceptions of homicide and opioids. This year's survey focused on gun-related issues.

Survey Results

There were 269 surveys completed by festival attendees. The largest age group in this sample was 18-24 year olds (30%), which is representative of an event held on a college campus. The smallest proportion of individuals completing the survey was 35-44 year olds.

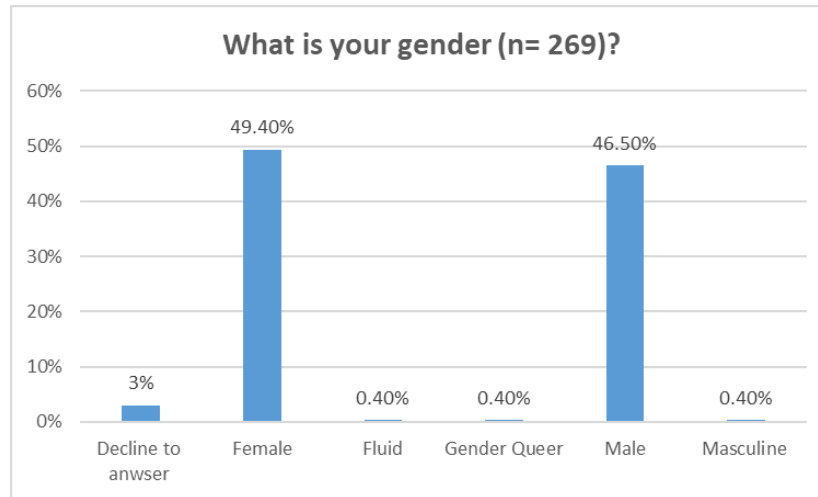
Figure 1. Age



¹ <https://www.rit.edu/imagine/>

Approximately half of the participants responded as female (49%) and slightly less responded as male (46%). In addition, 3% of people declined to answer and three separate individuals replied as fluid, gender queer, or masculine.

Figure 2. Gender



Most of the respondents to this survey reported that they did not own a gun (81.5%). Further, approximately one-third of the participants (35.4%) reported knowing someone who has been a victim of gun violence. Also, the majority of respondents reported living in the suburbs (76.7%). The survey included questions related to voting and social movements. Approximately 61% of individuals surveyed believe that student-led protests will lead to stricter gun control. The participants were evenly split on whether they would vote for a candidate who disagreed with them on gun control.

Gun Policy

Participants were asked seven forced-choice questions regarding if they support or oppose gun policies. Overwhelmingly, the respondents supported a ban on assault weapons (81.7%), requiring background checks for all gun buyers (98.9%), a ban on large-capacity bullet magazines (80.8%), and creation of a national gun registry for gun owners (85.8%). There was also overwhelming opposition to arming school teachers (90.3%). There was variation in the other two policy questions, however, the majority of participants opposed allowing open-carry in all states (64.2%). In addition, a majority of respondents opposed allowing victims to sue gun manufacturers (59.6%).

Table 1: Gun Control Policies

Policies	Support	Oppose
A ban on assault weapons (n=257)	81.70%	18.30%
Requiring background checks for all gun buyer (n= 268)	98.90%	1.10%
Arming school teachers (n= 256)	9.70%	90.30%
A ban on large-capacity bullet magazines (n= 260)	80.80%	19.20%
Allow open-carry of a firearm in all states (n=254)	35.80%	64.20%
Creation of a national registry for gun owners (n= 261)	85.80%	14.20%
Allow gun violence victims to sue gun manufacturers (n= 250)	40.40%	59.60%

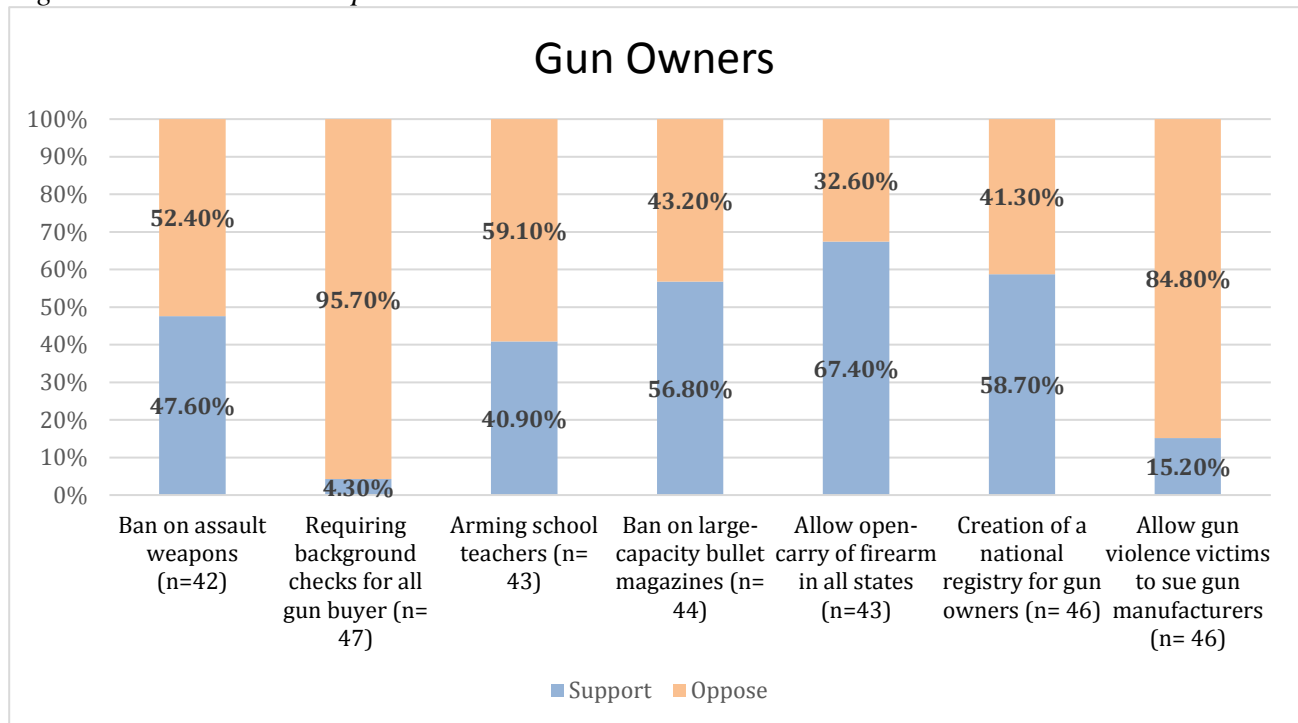
Further Analysis Results

Cross-tabulation allows comparison between two or more variables. By utilizing crosstab analysis, we can explore if respondents who reported owning a gun differ in their support for certain policies from individuals who responded that they did not own a gun.

Figures 3 and 4 provide responses for gun owners and non-gun owners, respectively. Of the respondents who reported owning a gun, 52% oppose a ban on assault weapons; whereas 88.8% of respondents who reported not-owning a gun supported the ban. Further, requiring background checks for all gun buyers has support from 99.5% of non-gun owners, but support from only 4.3% of gun owners. In addition, gun owners were in strong disagreement that gun violence victims should be able to sue gun manufacturers. Additionally, gun-owning respondents were more likely to support arming teachers (41%) than respondents who reported not owning a gun (6.9%). Of the respondents who reported owning a gun, 43% opposed a ban on large-capacity bullet magazines, whereas 86.5% of non-gun owners supported a ban on large-capacity bullet magazines. 67% of gun owners were in support of allowing open carry of a firearm in all states, whereas only 29% of non-gun owners were in support of such a measure. Finally, 59% of gun owners were in support of the creation of a national registry for

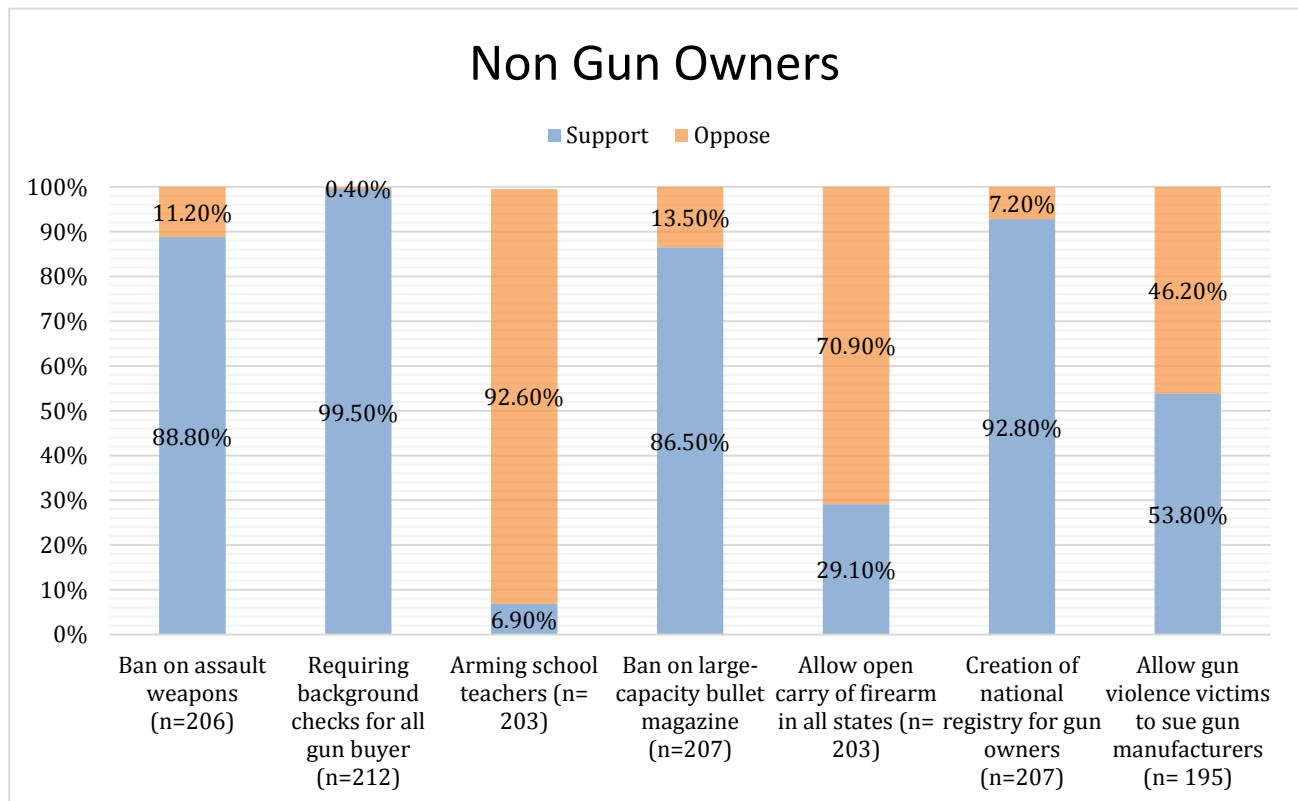
gun owners; whereas 93% of non-gun owners were in support of the creation of a national registry for gun owners.

Figure 3. Gun Owners Responses



In the Figure 4 below we provide the same information as the above analysis, but for non-gun owners.

Figure 4. Non-Gun Owner Responses



Additionally, we can explore if individuals who knew a victim of gun violence answered the policy questions differently than individuals who did not know a victim of gun violence. For respondents who reported not knowing a victim of gun violence, 23.4% opposed a ban on large capacity bullet magazines, however, of individuals who have been or know a victim of gun violence, only 12.5% opposed a ban on large capacity bullet magazines. This was the only policy question where knowing a gun violence victim had a statistically significant result ($p < .05$).

Finally, we looked at whether place of residence (city, suburb, or rural) was related to policy responses. For participants who reported living in a city, 25% supported allowing open carry of firearms in all states. Among individuals who described their place of residence as suburban, 34% supported allowing open carry in all states. Lastly, 55% of respondents who lived in rural areas supported allowing open carry in all states.

Overall, the cross tabulation results show that groups of individuals with different characteristics may answer differently than what the general result of the survey may suggest. This analysis allowed for comparison of differences across groups.

Conclusion

Participants of the survey are representative of a convenience sample; the results of this survey may not be reflective of the general public opinion. This sample population consists mainly of college students, staff/faculty, and their families. The results showed an overall support for policies that are likely to strengthen gun control. However, these results were more split among individuals who reported owning a gun. These results indicate that gun ownership is associated with views on gun policies.

Furthermore, nearly a third of respondents has or knew someone who has been a victim of gun violence, and such experiences affect their views on gun policies. An interesting finding for the sample is that the majority of participants believed that student-led protests will lead to stricter gun control policies. Being that the survey was taken on a college campus, this finding may be related to what individuals who participate in such student-led protest might believe. Finally, the participants of the

survey were evenly split on whether they would vote for a political candidate who disagreed with them on gun control policies, half of this sample viewed gun control as the pivotal issue in their political support. Overall, the survey results show that views on gun policy are mixed, and differences in opinions about gun policy can partially be explained by respondent characteristics.