



Carry On? Sheriff Perceptions of Concealed Carry in Ohio

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Purpose Statement

This exploratory study examined the perceived level of adequacy, stringency, and implications of the current carrying a concealed weapon (CCW) licensure process in Ohio by surveying sheriffs - the designated license issuing agents

Research Question

How do Ohio sheriffs perceive the presence of, application process, issuing criteria, educational and training requirements, and implications of carrying a concealed weapon (CCW) licenses in their county of employment and the state overall?

Methods

A 43 item web survey was created and distributed via email to reach all 88 county sheriffs within the state of Ohio, yielding a total of 26 responses

Findings

- Sheriff departments are the appropriate agency to handle CCW licensing
- Overall satisfaction with the current process and requirements necessary to obtain a license
- Perceived need for CCW licenses
- The current number of licenses improves safety, but it does *not* have impact on the number of law enforcement officers shot and or killed on duty annually
- Ohio should *not* become a constitutional carry state

Table 10 Mental competency measures

Are the above mental competency measures sufficient for you to determine an applicant's competency?			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	38.9	38.9
Yes	8	44.4	83.3
Not sure	3	16.7	100.0
Total	18	100.0	

Demographics

- 80.8% Aged 50 or older
- 69.2% More than 30 years in law enforcement
- 53.8% National Rifle Association (NRA) members
- 3.15 Average terms as sheriff

Table 3 Comparing average license actions for 2019 by county

	New Issuances	Renewals	Suspensions	Revocations
State total	54426	77959	1956	939
County average	618.48	885.90	22.23	10.67
Sheriff average	444.1	649	14.8	6.1
Difference	174.38	236.90	7.43	4.57
Percent error (%)	28.19	26.74	33.42	42.83

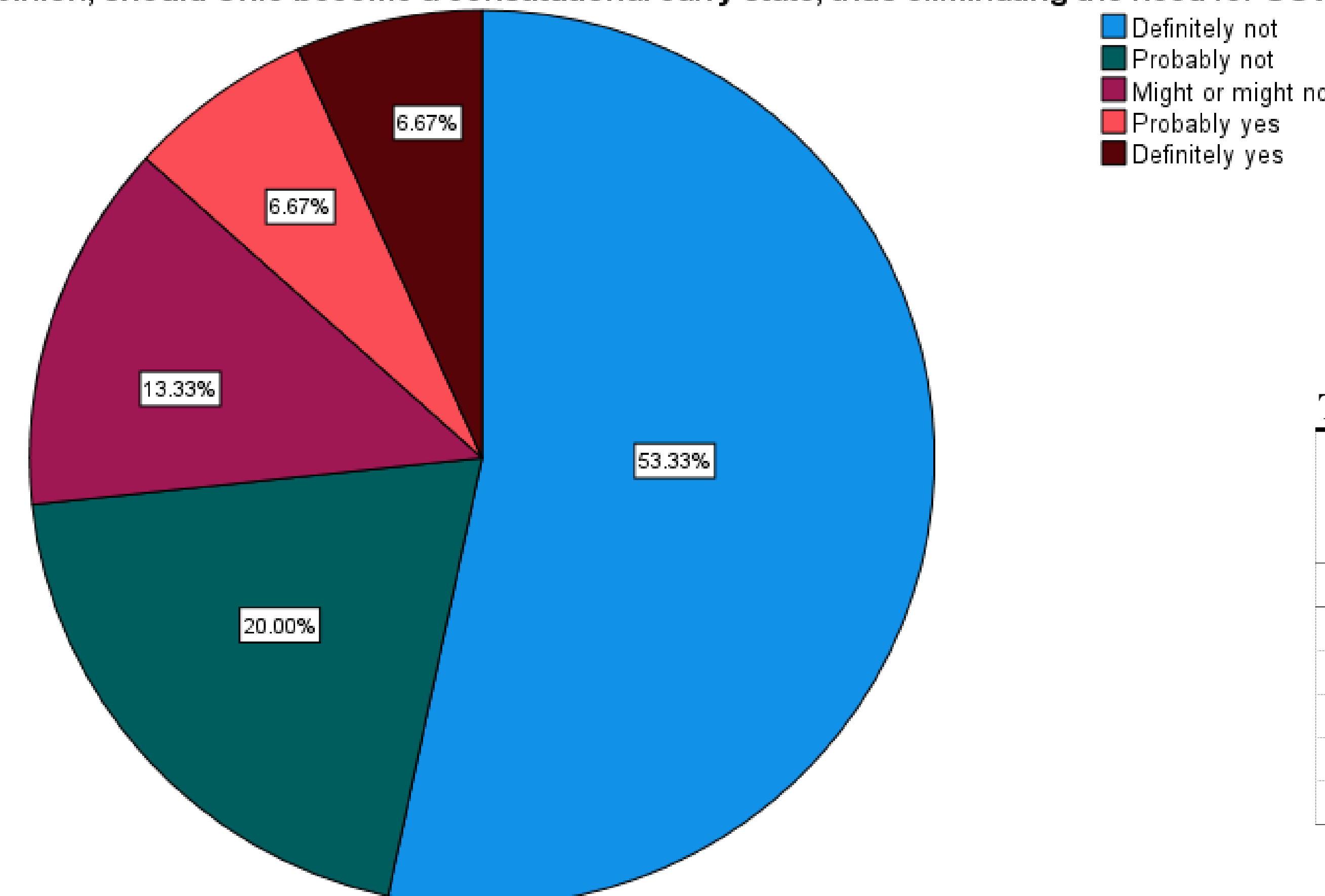
Table 17 Personal safety implications for sheriffs*

	Significantly less safe <i>n</i> (%)	Neither more nor less safe <i>n</i> (%)	Somewhat safer <i>n</i> (%)	Significantly safer <i>n</i> (%)
The number of active CCW licenses in your county of employment	1 (6.3)	5 (31.3)	7 (43.8)	3 (18.8)
The number of active CCW licenses in the state	1 (6.3)	5 (31.3)	7 (43.8)	3 (18.8)

Table 19 Public safety implications

	Significantly less safe <i>n</i> (%)	Somewhat less safe <i>n</i> (%)	Neither more nor less safe <i>n</i> (%)	Somewhat safer <i>n</i> (%)	Significantly safer <i>n</i> (%)
The number of active CCW licenses in your county of employment	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	4 (25.0)	7 (43.8)	4 (25.0)
The number of active CCW licenses in the state	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	4 (25.0)	7 (43.8)	4 (25.0)

In your opinion, should Ohio become a constitutional carry state, thus eliminating the need for CCW licensure?



*Table does not include response choices which were not selected

Discussion

- State licensure process should remain
 - No transition from a shall-issue to a constitutional carry policy
- Study supports the maintenance of the current procedures or future policy changes
 - Specifically, regarding competency measures and mandated training hours

Limitations

- Nonresponse Bias (29.5% response rate)
 - As the survey progressed, the number of respondents decreased
 - Fear of a lack of anonymity and confidentiality
- Respondent bias
 - Partisan election of sheriffs
 - Sensitivity among an elected, law enforcement official)

Future Research

- Are these views consistent among license-issuing agents in other shall-issue states?
- Do these perceptions extend beyond sheriffs (e.g., general public)?
- Why do these views exist among Ohio sheriffs?

Table 11 Physician consult*

Please express your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Applicants' physicians should be consulted as part of the application process in order to determine whether an applicant is mentally competent to obtain and possess a CCW license"			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	4	22.2	22.2
Somewhat disagree	5	27.8	50.0
Neither agree nor disagree	4	22.2	72.2
Somewhat agree	5	27.8	100.0
Total	18	100.0	