

# **Beyond the Movement: State Action in Addressing Campus Sexual Violence**

AmiJo Wadena

Bemidji State University

Political Science Senior Thesis

Bemidji State University

Thomas Beech, Advisor

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## **Abstract**

*The "Me Too" movement, started by actress Alyssa Milano, has helped shine a light on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence throughout the country. While it has helped the public understand the magnitude of the issue, it has only started the conversation about sexual violence. And while the focus has mostly been on Hollywood, there has been one area that is being overlooked; sexual violence on College and University campuses. With Secretary DeVos' repeal of Obama era policies, the current administration is being a lot less transparent when it comes to sexual violence, in general. With policy-making responsibility falling back on the states, it begs the question; which states are more likely to have effective policies regarding sexual violence on campuses? The data I collected includes elements taken from sexual violence statutes gathered from all 50 states. In addition, I collected data on the number of incidents of sexual violence from campuses in each state, a possible indication of effectiveness among state level campus sexual violence policies. The tentative results indicate which states are the most prepared to handle the increased responsibility for addressing campus sexual violence."*

## **Introduction**

Anderson (2016) observes that rape law has undergone substantial, positive change over the past four decades, with feminist reformers succeeding in making the crime gender-neutral and in abolishing several unique procedural requirements that overburdened prosecutions of rape unfairly. Some of these modifications have targeted provisions that required complainants to corroborate credible testimony with extra evidence, victims' efforts to resist perpetrators to the highest levels of their physical capacities, victims' prompt complaints to relevant authorities, and skeptical attitudes towards complainants' testimonies among jurors.

The feminist movement has further promoted interpretations of Title IX as mandating the responses of universities and colleges to sexual assault on campus equitably (Anderson, 2016). Nonetheless, despite this progress, addressing and responding to sexual violence on the campuses of colleges and universities has remained a challenge. Important hurdles in this context include the patriarchal culture that condones sexual violence against women, lack of empowerment among victims, persistent legislative and institutional challenges, and concerns among students about the fairness, worth, and effectiveness of both campus disciplinary systems and local justice systems (Konradi, 2016; DeMatteo et al., 2015; Henrick, 2013; Mancini et al., 2016; Stotzer & McCartney, 2015).

In the following review of the literature, I argue that individual states are more prepared compared with the federal government to create and enforce effective legislation to address and respond to the problem of sexual violence on university and college campuses. This is possible because of states' greater and stronger capacities to address the unique challenges of responses to sexual violence on individual campuses. These capacities have a basis on states' better capabilities to cooperate with campus authorities and stakeholders in the local community to devise innovative ways of preventing, addressing, and responding to cases of sexual assault on campus relative to the federal government.

### **Current Federal Legislation on the subject of Sexual Violence**

Karjane, Fisher, and Cullen (2005) note the considerations of most crime observers and analysts that sexual assault is the most underreported violent crime in America. On university and college campuses, acquaintances of the victim are the perpetrators of most sexual assaults, which is partly the reason for this underreporting. Owing to these observations, campus crime, generally, and sexual assault, in particular, have received increasingly more attention at the

federal level of government in recent times. The U.S. Congress has responded to the growing need to address campus crime by enacting various laws aimed at requiring the institutions of higher learning to notify students about crime on campus, maintain open logs of crime activity, publicize their response and prevention policies, and ensure the basic rights of sexual assault victims (Karjane et al., 2005; Paludi, 2016). One of the most significant among these laws is the Clery Act (the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act), which required each federally funded school to produce annual security reports, including an assessment of sexual crimes in and around campus. Beginning in 1990, the U.S. Congress acted to ensure that the institutions of higher learning developed and implemented strategies to prevent and respond to cases of sexual assault on campus, along with offering accurate information on campus crime to both students and their parents. In 1992, enforcement of the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights, which was an amendment to the 1990 Act, required educational institutions to develop prevention policies and offer certain pertinent assurances to victims (Karjane et al., 2005).

Despite the huge resources of the Federal government, studies have illustrated problems in its efforts to address and respond to sexual crime on campus. Karjane et al. (2005) observe uneven compliance with Federal law among the institutions of higher learning. While a majority of the institutions observe the requirements to report data on the crimes, only a third of them do this in a manner that fully obeys the Federal laws. Anonymous reporting is an option in only half of the country's institutions, while the institutions also offer basic resources necessary to respond to sexual crimes unevenly (Karjane et al., 2005). Together, these findings indicate the inadequacy of policies and guidelines at the federal level in addressing and responding to sexual crimes on college and university campuses.

Anderson (2016) notes that rape law at the federal level has undergone substantial and positive change over the past four decades, with feminist reformers succeeding in making the crime gender-neutral and abolishing various unique procedural requirements that burdened the prosecutions of rape unfairly. In the modern society, the reform movement has focused on clarifying the nature of consent and abolishing the legal criterion of force. Alongside these focuses, the reform movement has targeted campus sexual assault as an area of interest. While Title IX represents the federal law that bans gender discrimination in education, the feminist movement has promoted interpretations of the law as mandating institutions of higher learning to respond in an equitable way to a sexual assault on campus (Anderson, 2016). Nonetheless, a section of legal scholars has opposed the role of these institutions in regulating campus sexual activity, while others have questioned whether the disciplinary system at the college level or the criminal justice system is better equipped to address and respond to cases of sexual assault on campus.

In 2012, the U.S. enforced a new definition of rape to capture gender-neutrality and eliminate the force requirement. Recent decisions in the Supreme Court have also raised the principle of sexual autonomy in cases of sexual violence. In 2003, the Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* declared that liberty presumes autonomy of the self, including freedoms of belief, expression, thought, and intimate conduct (Anderson, 2016). In a different case, the Court's opinion was that the scope of the principle of protection of liberty in the Due Process Clause under the 14th Amendment covered particular choices among individuals that were important for their autonomy and dignity, including intimate decisions relating to personal identity and beliefs. Nonetheless, many states have continued to require force as a criterion to recognize non-consensual penetration as a rape (Anderson, 2016). Anderson (2016) notes that legal and cultural

challenges have undermined the application of Title IX on sexual assaults on campus. These challenges include continued failure to treat rape equitably, the continued backlash against progressive reforms of rape law, and a tendency to embrace conservative reforms of rape law (which discourages victims to report the crime openly and avoid public disgrace).

Ridolfi-Starr (2016) argues that current federal legislation on the subject of sexual violence is ineffective and inappropriate owing to its lack of mechanisms to safeguard the privacy of both victims and accused persons and promote the trust of individuals in the systems of addressing and responding to the crime, especially on campus. Despite the evolution of Title IX-based systems and policies to address the crime of sexual assault on institutions of higher learning, Ridolfi-Starr (2016) argues that these systems face numerous challenges. These include criticisms of unfairness in investigations and sanctions and allegations of discriminatory treatment against minority communities. Stakeholders in the application of Title IX in addressing and responding to cases of sexual assault on campuses at the federal level are likely to remain unable to address these important concerns without a mechanism to require higher levels of transparency in the legislation and its application at the campus level. Ridolfi-Starr (2016) argues that current federal mechanisms targeted at addressing and responding to campus sexual assault cases, especially Title IX-related mechanisms and procedures, feature opacity (lack of transparency and accountability), thereby making the processes and mechanisms that learning institutions apply to address sexual violence on their campuses untrustworthy and ineffective. This opacity fosters a culture of impunity and stokes criticisms of the system from stakeholders who agitate for more robust rights for accused students. The application of federal-level policies and laws against sexual assault on campuses has led to charges of unfair investigations and discrimination against particular populations.

## **The Inadequacy of current State Statutes targeting Sexual Violence on Campuses**

Morse, Sponsler, and Fulton (2015) note that the efforts of universities and colleges to prevent, address, and respond to campus sexual violence in recent times have come under increasing public scrutiny. Contemporary national studies have shown that a fifth (20%) of females, 5% of males, and 25% of transgender students suffer sexual violence after enrolling in college. The high profile nature of sexual violence cases on university and college campuses has influenced the status of the issue as a top priority in policy action at the state level. There have been increasing calls for policy actions at the state level to shape the responses of higher learning institutions to sexual violence in their campuses. Communications and documents from the Federal government, such as a “dear colleague letter” in 2015 that summarized regulatory amendments to the Clery and Violence against Women Acts, have had significant influence on campuses’ efforts to create environments that support survivors of sexual violence and establish processes to handle such cases fairly and equitably (Morse et al., 2015). Campus sexual violence has become an important area of policy-making among individual states.

In the 2015 sessions of legislation, at least 29 states across the country either introduced or enacted laws relating to campus sexual violence (Morse et al., 2015). In the course of these efforts at the state level, several common policy themes have emerged. Four of the prominent themes include the roles of law enforcement, definitions of what constitutes and does not constitute affirmative consent, notation of serious violations of codes of conduct on campuses on student transcripts, and the roles of legal counsel in the adjudication processes on campus. Morse et al. (2015) contend that the forms of policy development and adoption among U.S. states represent an extensive and structured transfer of policy action from the federal government to the states in relation to on-campus sexual violence.

An assessment of current State statutes targeting sexual violence on campuses indicates several challenges relating to the themes identified above and other relevant ones. Various states have demonstrated a lack of clarity on the definition of affirmative consent, especially in terms of the methods of obtaining the consent, the parties involved in sexual encounters that have an obligation to obtain consent, and the frequency that is necessary in obtaining such consent (Morse et al., 2015). Since 2014, Illinois, Hawaii, New York, and California have enacted legislation that defines or addresses affirmative consent in sexual activity among students in higher institutions of learning. The definitions in Illinois, California, and New York have the common element of a freely offered or considered agreement to participate in sexual activity, with the provisions clarifying that the absence of resistance or protest is not necessarily an indication of consent. In New York and California, the definition refers to the requirement that the consent to sexual activity must have a basis on knowledge and consciousness, while New York's definition also includes the need for mutual consent among all participants (Morse et al., 2015). The three states' provisions further portray that individuals' unconsciousness, being asleep, and incapacitation resulting from alcohol or drug use or mental disability represent conditions in which individuals cannot give consent to sexual activity. Nonetheless, state-level policies that define affirmative consent have raised several issues that require extra attention in policy-making before effective and coordinated implementation of action against campus sexual violence is possible. These issues include the rights of the accused (especially owing to the fact that the laws of affirmative consent shift the burden of demonstrating affirmation from the survivor to the accused), uncertainty about initiation of sexual activity and the individual responsible for obtaining consent when the two individuals are intoxicated, and alignments of the



definitions of affirmative consent with states' criminal codes in sexual violence (Morse et al., 2015; Smith & Der Voo, 2013).

Another important challenge in state statutes aimed at addressing and responding to campus sexual crime relates to the decision whether, and at what point of the response, to involve law enforcement. On one hand, the obligations of supporting local law enforcement agencies in investigating cases of sexual violence and related crimes and ensuring a timely and thorough investigation of the crime require collaboration between campus authorities and local law enforcement agencies (Morse et al., 2015). On the other hand, campus authorities have an obligation to protect the rights of the survivor/victim, thereby promoting the need to consider whether to report a case of sexual assault to law enforcement. Other important pending issues in the statutes of states in addressing campus sexual violence concern observations of students with histories of sexual violence and other code violations being able to transfer without the knowledge of receiving institutions and considerations of students' rights to fair disciplinary processes that require the formal roles of legal counsel. Morse et al. (2015) observe that owing to the high profile nature of sexual assault crimes in public, campus authorities and state leaders have to consider whether to allow legal counsel to participate fully in campus conduct proceedings. Lombardi (2014) notes further that campus authorities have challenges in deciding whether to align punishments for sexual crimes on campus with campus disciplinary mechanisms or with applicable state laws, especially considering victims' demands for justice.

### **Theories on Variations between States on Sexual Violence Legislation**

As the discussion above shows, different states across the U.S. have illustrated different approaches towards legislation on sexual violence. The causes of these differences vary from the political ideologies of their leaders to cultural and socioeconomic factors. Moncrief and Squire

(2017) note that the interests of leaders and holders of state-level offices are of tremendous importance in the lives and experiences of citizens in these states owing to the influences of these interests on political decisions. In modern times, governors, legislators, and other office-holders at the state level have greater opportunities to experiment and innovate as the federal government shifts more financial and legislative responsibilities to them (Glatter, 2017). In comparison with the federal government, states occupy a more strategic position in evaluating, understanding, and responding to the particular needs, interests, opportunities, and challenges of citizens. State lawmakers and officeholders are more independent and less reliant on lobbyists for information on issues of policy, while ordinary citizens have a better chance of influencing directly the government policies and actions at the state level through recalls, referenda, and local initiatives (Moncrief & Squire, 2017).

This means that the interests of local citizens and local culture in a state are more potent as influences on the decisions of states and state-level officeholders. In effect, the political ideologies and political decisions of individual states on a variety of issues, including laws on sexual assault, are likely to be highly divergent according to political ideologies and cultural and socioeconomic factors at the state level.

### **Conclusion**

These assessments indicate the deficiency of existing state statutes aimed at addressing, preventing, and responding to cases of sexual assaults on campus. To be effective, it is necessary to address these deficiencies and integrate government policies with those of individual campuses and local communities to devise innovative ways of preventing, addressing, and responding to cases of sexual assault on campus. Compared with the federal government, states

have better capacities to realize these objectives through cooperation with campus authorities and stakeholders in the local community.

## **Research Question**

The combination of the Title IX rollbacks in early 2017, along with the rise of the #MeToo movement at the end of the year, helped to open the floodgates and bring the topics of sexual violence and harassment to familiar, but more vocal audience. The demand for state action from victim advocate has resulted in questioning of whether or not state governments are ready to regulate instances of campus sexual violence. This was followed by the question of what can impact the number of reports of sexual violence across college and university campuses. And what are potential influences on the strength of state sexual assault laws?

## **Methods and Analysis**

To answer my research question, I looked at the total number of reported incidents of sexual violence occurring on campuses in each state. I then found some variables that could possibly explain the rates of sexual violence by state; poverty and unemployment rates along with other independent variables. When looking at the strength of state sexual assault statutes, I decided to look at variables like the percent of women serving in state legislatures and abortion restrictions, among others.

My data has been collected from a number of sources. The data from state law statutes were collected from three separate tables from a journal article written by David DeMatteo, for the American Psychology Association. The tables labeled elements found in sexual assault statutes from all 50 states, including whether or not specific factors were incorporated into a given state's sexual assault laws.

The dataset of reported incidents of campus sexual violence was collected from the US Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security analysis tool. The data gathered from the tool included numerous institutions of higher education. The data included the total number of incidents from three different aspects of sexual violence; dating violence, domestic violence and stalking.

The independent variables included in this analysis were gathered from various sources, depending on the variable. I collected racial demographics from all 50 states from the US Census Bureau. I gathered state poverty rates from an article within the World Atlas website. I collected the data for women legislators and abortion restrictions from the SPSS states dataset. The data I collected on sex education programs came from the Guttmacher Institute, while the data of alcohol consumption by state in 2015 from the website Statista.

## **Coding Data**

When coding the data from the DeMatteo article tables, I looked to see whether or not a given element was present in sexual assault statutes. If the given element was present in a state's law, I would code it with a "1". If the same component was not present in a state's statute, I would code it with a "0". I did the same for a few of my independent variables as well.

Once I imported my data into SPSS, I added together a combination of all elements that I considered indicators of a strong sexual assault policy, which could be applied to incidents on college and university campuses. The addition of my data into SPSS would end up creating an interval level variable to use when conducting my analysis.

For the data I collected from the Department of Education, I added up the numbers listed for each incident from the universities in every state. This would give me the total number of reported incidents for dating violence, domestic violence and stalking across every state. After adding together the total incidents by state, I then added the state totals together, to give myself a total of incidents on campuses across the country.

For my independent variables, I started by collecting the data from each of my given sources. I then organized the variable by state and imported the data to SPSS. Each of these interval level variables will be used to give me an idea of which states are the most prepared for regulating campus sexual violence policies. I then binned each interval level variable into three categories; "Low", "Medium", or "High". With the sex education program data, I added elements that I felt were good indicators of a strong program; whether or not the programs were mandatory or whether they talked about healthy decision making and avoiding coercion.

## Data Analysis

**Table 1.1: Crosstabulation of Campus Sexual Violence Per Capita by Presence of Affirmative Consent Legislation**

		Affirmative Consent Legislation Present?		Total
		No	Yes	
Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence	Low	16	1	17
		34.8%	25.0%	34.0%
	Medium	23	0	23
		50.0%	0.0%	46.0%
	High	7	3	10
		15.2%	75.0%	20.0%
Total		46	4	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 8.680, sig. = .013, Lambda= .097, sig= .074, Somers D= .178, Sig. = .223*

For this analysis, I wanted to see if the number of reported campus sexual violence was affected by the presence of affirmative consent legislation. Since many states statutes lack a clear definition on consent, I believed that states that lacked any sort of affirmative consent legislation would have higher reports of campus sexual violence. There are currently only 4 states that have passed and have started enforcing affirmative consents law; California being the first in 2015. In the past 3 years, Illinois, Connecticut and New York have all passed legislation regard the concept of affirmative consent.

With my analysis, I noticed large differences in the amount of cases and, in turn, variation within the total percentages. This indicates there is a relationship between the two

variables. Chi-square has a measure value of 8.680, resulting in a p-value of .013. The p-value is below the .05 level needed to indicate statistical significance. Both the value and p-value of Somers D are not at levels indicative of statistical significance, which means that it is rather difficult to predict the amount of reported incidents of campus sexual violence, without knowing about the presence of affirmative consent laws.

**Table 1.2: Crosstabulation of Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence by Strength of High School Sex Education Programs**

		Strength of Sex Education Programs			Total
		Weak	Moderate	Strong	
		Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence	Low	5 27.8%	
	Medium	8 44.4%	11 50.0%	4 40.0%	23 46.0%
	High	5 27.8%	1 4.5%	4 40.0%	10 20.0%
Total		18 100.0%	22 100.0%	10 100.0%	50 100.0%

*Chi-Square= 6.966, Sig. = .138, Somers D= .006, Sig. = .964*

For this analysis, I wanted to see if there was a relationship between the strength of high school level sexual education policies and reported incidents of campus sexual violence. Sex Education is an important topic high schools cover, and it may be the only form of sex education that some individuals will ever receive. Despite this, not many states don't make the class mandatory or medically accurate; even making sure that programs stress the importance of abstinence, rather than discussing how to avoid coercing sex or how to make good and healthy



decisions. I believe that states with strong sex education programs would have lower reported incidents than those with weaker programs.

Looking at the results of the crosstabs, there is variation between the total number of cases and the total percentages. While this could indicate significance, the best way would to look at the results of Chi-square. With a p-value of .138, chi-square is telling me there is no relationship between these variables. While Somers D is telling me that the strength of sex education programs is not a good predictor of reported incidents of campus sexual violence. Disproving my theory, only two states [Insert state names here], have low reported level of campus sexual violence with strong sex education programs.

**Table 1.3: Crosstabulation of Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence by Poverty Rate**

		Poverty Rate			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence	Low	7	2	8	17
		41.2%	11.8%	50.0%	34.0%
	Medium	4	11	8	23
		23.5%	64.7%	50.0%	46.0%
	High	6	4	0	10
		35.3%	23.5%	0.0%	20.0%
Total		17	17	16	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 12.443, Sig. = .014, Somers D= -.213, Sig. = .117*

For this next analysis, I wanted to test and see if there was a significant relationship between poverty rates and reported incidents of campus sexual violence. As I stated in my previous analysis, poverty is one of the most common community risk factors for victims of sexual violence. I have to admit, I'm not sure how poverty really affects incidents on campus. Most of the time, the victims know their attackers, so I figure poverty rates may be a factor in cases of stranger rape. Despite my confusion, I believe there will be a relationship between these two variables. I believe higher levels of poverty will, in turn, be associated with higher reported incidents of campus sexual violence.

The results of the crosstabs tells me that it looks like my theory may be right, due to the variation in the total percentages and the total counts. The p-value of Chi-Square is at .014, which is much lower than the .05 level of significance I am looking for. This tells me that there is a significant relationship between the two. Both the negative Somers D and the declining number of cases going from low to high levels of poverty is interesting. It seems that the relationship between my variables is the exact opposite than my hypothesis. It makes me wonder if poverty affects incidents of sexual violence as a community level, not just across college and universities.

**Table 1.4: Crosstabulation of Campus Sexual Violence by Alcohol Consumption Per Capita**

		Alcohol Consumption Per Capita (Per Gal)			Total
		(Binned)			
		Low	Medium	High	
Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence	Low	5	8	4	17
		29.4%	47.1%	25.0%	34.0%
	Medium	10	4	9	23
		58.8%	23.5%	56.3%	46.0%
	High	2	5	3	10

		11.8%	29.4%	18.8%	20.0%
Total		17	17	16	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 5.520, Sig. = .238, Somers D= .052, Sig. =.634*

For this analysis, I wanted to see if there was a relationship between alcohol consumption per capita and reported incidents of campus sexual violence. In many cases of sexual violence on college and university campuses, alcohol is usually involved. I believe there won't be a relationship between the two variables. I figure in incidents involving alcohol are less likely to be reported; our fear that the victim will get into trouble for violating campus alcohol policies.

The results of the crosstabs show that there isn't much variation in the total cases and percentages. This is giving me the impression that there may not be a relationship between the two variables. But the p-value of Chi-Square is .238, which is above the .05 level of significance

I am looking for. The p-value of Somers D is .634, which is telling me there is no relationship between these variables, proving my theory. Despite being a area left

**Table 1.5: Crosstabulation of Report Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence by Unemployment**

		Unemployment rate			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Reported Incidents of Campus Sexual Violence	Low	4	10	3	17
		36.4%	33.3%	33.3%	34.0%
	Medium	3	14	6	23
		27.3%	46.7%	66.7%	46.0%
	High	4	6	0	10
		36.4%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Total		11	30	9	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 4.973, Sig. = .290, Somers D= -.114, Sig. = .372*

In this analysis, I wanted to see if reported incidents of campus sexual violence was affected by unemployment rates. Similar to poverty rates, I believed that there would be a relationship between the two variables. My hypothesis for this analysis is that as unemployment rates rise, the number of reports of campus sexual violence would increase as well.

Looking at the table, there is little variation in the total cases and total percentages. Chi-Square was measured at a value of 4.973 which isn't large enough to produce the .05 p-value indicating statistical significance. The value of Somers D was measured at -.114, with a p-value of .372, this is a little different than my other analyses. A negative value for Somers D indicates that there is a possible, negative relationship between variables. Surprisingly, as the unemployment rates went up, the reported incidents of campus sexual violence went down; with no high numbers of reports in areas with high unemployment rates. The results of this analysis ended up disproving my theory.

**Table 2.1: Crosstabulation of State Sexual Assault Statutes by Women Legislators**

		Percentage of Women in the Legislature			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Strength of State Sexual Assault Statutes	Weak	8	7	6	21
		47.1%	41.2%	37.5%	42.0%
	Moderate	4	6	4	14
		23.5%	35.3%	25.0%	28.0%
	Strong	5	4	6	15
		29.4%	23.5%	37.5%	30.0%
Total		17	17	16	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 1.218, Sig. = .875, Somers D= .076, Sig. = .560*

For this analysis, I wanted to see if there is a significant relationship between the percent of female legislators and the strength of campus sexual assault statutes. My theory was that there would be a relationship between the two variables. My theory is that if there are more female legislators, sexual assault statutes should get stronger. My hope is that female legislators would want to create and pass protective legislation that could be applied to incidents occurring on

college and university campuses. Even if this isn't the case in the federal government with Secretary DeVos, but, maybe it would be the case in the state government.

Just looking at the lack of variation between either the numbers or percentages, there doesn't seem to be a relationship between these variables. If there were a greater variation, there would mean that there was a stronger relationship than there is. Taking into account Chi-Square and Somers D, whose p-values are well above the .05 level of significance, the data tells me one thing. There is no statistically significant relationship between my variables, which means I have to reject my hypothesis.

**Table 2.2: Crosstabulation of State Sexual Assault Statutes by High School Sex Education Programs**

		Strength of High School Sex Education Program			Total
		Weak	Moderate	Strong	
Strength of State Sexual Assault Statutes	Weak	8	9	4	21
		44.4%	40.9%	40.0%	42.0%
	Moderate	5	6	3	14
		27.8%	27.3%	30.0%	28.0%
	Strong	5	7	3	15
		27.8%	31.8%	30.0%	30.0%
Total		18	22	10	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= .114, Sig. = .998, Somers D= .032, Sig. = .797*

In this analysis, I wanted to see if the strength of state high school sex education programs would have a relationship with the strength of state sexual assault statutes. Sex education should be consider a more important aspect of high school education than it is treated as. I think that states with stronger sex education programs will have strong sexual assault

statutes. If states are able to instruct schools and urge them to provide proper education to help and prepare students to make responsible choices and prompting healthy and open communication. If this is the case, the same states should provide a more clear definition of consent and incapacitation, as well as a better stance on the role of alcohol.

Looking at the results of my crosstabs, there was not a lot of variation between the number of cases or total percentages, hinting that there isn't a relationship. Focusing on chi-square, which had a measured value of .114 and a p-value of .998, which tells me it isn't significant. The value and p-value of Somers D is telling me there is no statistically significant relationship between my variables. I also noticed something else; as the strength of sex education programs went up, the number of cases with strong sexual assault statutes went down high school sex education programs and the strength of state sexual assault statutes. The results of this analysis tell me that my theory is wrong and there is no relationship between high school sex education programs and the strength of state sexual assault laws.

**Table 2.3: Crosstabulation of Strength of State Sexual Assault Statutes by LGBT Population**

		Percent LGBT			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Strength of State Sexual Assault Statutes	Weak	7	7	7	21
		36.8%	38.9%	53.8%	42.0%
	Moderate	7	4	3	14
		36.8%	22.2%	23.1%	28.0%
	Strong	5	7	3	15
		26.3%	38.9%	23.1%	30.0%
Total		19	18	13	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square* = 2.222, *Sig.* = .695, *Somers D* = -.07, *Sig.* = .563



This next analysis I ran was to see if there was any relationship between the percent of population that was LGBT and the strength of state sexual assault statutes. My theory is that there is going to be a relationship between these two variables. When I gathered the data for this DV, I noticed majority of the state statutes included gender neutral language when considering the gender of either the victim or perpetrator in this type of incident. I believe that states with a larger population of LGBT individuals will have stronger sexual assault statutes. This includes gender neutral language within statutes to describe who can be a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence, which could also apply to situations on college and university campuses.

Looking at my analysis, my numbers and percentages haven't really changed from the last two analyses, which tells me that there probably isn't a relationship between these variables. So I look to Chi-Square and Somers D to provide a more definitive answer. The p-values of both Chi-Square and Somers D are, once again, well above the .05 level of significance I am looking for. This tells me that there is no statistically significant relationship between these variables and the numbers tell me something different. There are only three states that have strong sexual assault statutes, along with a high percentage of LGBT residents, disproving my theory.

**Table 2.4: Crosstabulation of Strength of Sexual Assault Statutes by Poverty Rate**

		Poverty Rates			
		Low	Medium	High	Total
Strength of State Sexual Assault Statute	Weak	10	7	4	21
		58.8%	41.2%	25.0%	42.0%
	Moderate	4	5	5	14
		23.5%	29.4%	31.3%	28.0%
	Strong	3	5	7	15
		17.6%	29.4%	43.8%	30.0%

	Total	17	17	16	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 4.318, sig. = .365, Somers D= .260, sig. = .028*

For this analysis, I wanted to see if there was a relationship between poverty rates and the strength of state sexual assault statutes. I believe there is a relationship, given that poverty is one of the largest community based risk factors of becoming a victim of sexual violence. I also believe if a state has high levels of poverty, there will be stronger sexual violence statutes at a state level. Depending on a state's poverty rate, legislators may feel motivated to create and enact legislation that protects their citizens against crime, in general. This could include protecting young adults entering college from crimes associated with poverty, including any form of sexual violence, would be important.

Looking at the results of the crosstabs, the totals were too close together and there was little variation between total percentages. I also noticed that my results were the exact opposite to my theory; having high poverty rates didn't result in strong sexual assault statutes, with areas with low poverty rates having the weakest legislation. I observed Chi-Square's p-level, and noticed that it is above the .05 level of statistical significance. But the p-value of Somers D is .028, which is, interestingly enough, below the .05 level of significance. According to my analysis, while Chi-Square is telling me there is no significant relationship between my variables, Somers D is telling me that I am able to predict how strong a statute will be, even if I'm not sure about the rate of poverty.

**Table 2.5: Crosstabulation of Strength of Sexual Assault Statutes by Abortion Restrictions**

		Abortion Restrictions			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Strength of State Sexual Assault Statutes	Weak	10	6	5	21
		62.5%	35.3%	29.4%	42.0%
	Moderate	2	8	4	14
		12.5%	47.1%	23.5%	28.0%
	Strong	4	3	8	15
		25.0%	17.6%	47.1%	30.0%
Total		16	17	17	50
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Chi-Square= 8.771, Sig. = .067, Lambda= .226, Sig. = .113, Somers D= .251, Sig. = .059*

With this analysis, I wanted to test and see if there would be a significant relationship between abortion restrictions and the strength of state sexual assault statutes. This particular independent variable could be a strong indicator for which states could provide or improve statutes to be more transparent and protective of female victims. I believe that higher amounts of abortion restrictions will result in weaker sexual assault statutes. Abortion restrictions can reflect the political ideology of states, which is similar to the laws regard sexual assault or violence. I believe conservative states will have weaker abortion restrictions.

Looking at my data, Chi-square is measured at 8.771 with a p-value of .067, just above the .05 level of statistical significance. The p-values for Lambda and Somers D also tell me that the relationship between my variables is not there. But Somers D looks like it is telling me that I could almost predict the cases of sexual assault statutes, even if I didn't know about abortion restrictions, but not in a way that proves a relationship. Unfortunately, weaker abortion restrictions ended up resulting in weaker sexual assault statutes, instead of what I thought which, disproved my theory.



## **Conclusion**

Currently, there is a high rate of sexual assaults on campus. Most of these cases go unreported as well as unpunished. To make matters worse, the current federal guidelines and policies have been inadequate in addressing the issue of sexual crimes on campuses. Some legislation such as the landmark Title IX legislation has ensured that schools are charged with the obligation of ensuring that students affected by sexual assault get justice. Nonetheless, most colleges and universities do not implement adequate measures for preventing sexual. Germain (2016) noted that in spite of over 50 years of anti-rape activism as well as more than twenty years of federal legislation on university sexual violence, sexual assault cases on American colleges and universities is still under-reported, rampant, and inadequately understood. Consequently, there is a need to address the inadequacy of legislation to reduce sexual assaults on campus and ensure that the victims get justice.

This study proposes the integration of government policies with those of state and individual campuses. Moreover, local communities should come up with innovative means of addressing, preventing, and acting in response to cases of sexual assault on campuses. The states are also in a better place to avert and counter sexual violence through cooperating with campus authorities and other important personnel in the communities where the campuses are located.. Campus sexual assault is a complicated matter that requires a collaborative and comprehensive prevention approach. Efforts for preventing sexual assault on campus have to be strategic, planned, and intentional. A state-level action planning process for sexual assault prevention would play a key role. The interests of state-level offices are important for the residents' experiences and lives. This is attributed to the influence of these interests on political issues (Moncrief & Squire, 2017). The states are well placed to implement measures that are

appropriate for the specific problems leading to persistence of campus sexual violence. More than 20 states have taken legislative actions on the issue whereas others have enacted the policy. Nonetheless, it is uneven across the states.

There is no comprehensible policy architecture in all states that direct observance of Title IX. In addition, there is no consistency in safeguarding victims of sexual violence. The concepts articulated in the criminal laws are time and again vague and ill-defined and fall short of generating enough support structures for adjudicating the management of sexual assault in universities. What is more, the rules and guidelines at the state level are uneven when it comes to what institutions can do to handle and avert sexual violence incidences. Different states have varying sexual assault statutes, and this leads to a variation in policies regarding campus sexual violence (Lopes-Baker, McDonald, Schissler & Pirone, 2017). There is a need for evenness as well as focus on regulatory and legislative strategies at the federal level to deal with and thwart sexual violence. Lack of federal oversight or dependable emphasis on enforcement of current law and regulation has led to state law that does not offer accurate enforcement methods for protecting victims. This has an adverse effect on the rights as well as protection of victims.

Therefore, states should reflect the best interests of sexual assault victims. They have stronger and greater aptitude to address the distinct challenges of actions taken to manage sexual violence on individual colleges and universities. They are more strategically positioned to assess, react, and comprehend the specific interests, requirements, issues, and chances for citizens. In addition, federal, state and local communities' policies should be integrated to formulate effective ways of addressing campus sexual violence.

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