

# Does Increased Policing Reduce Violent Crimes in the Middle Grades?

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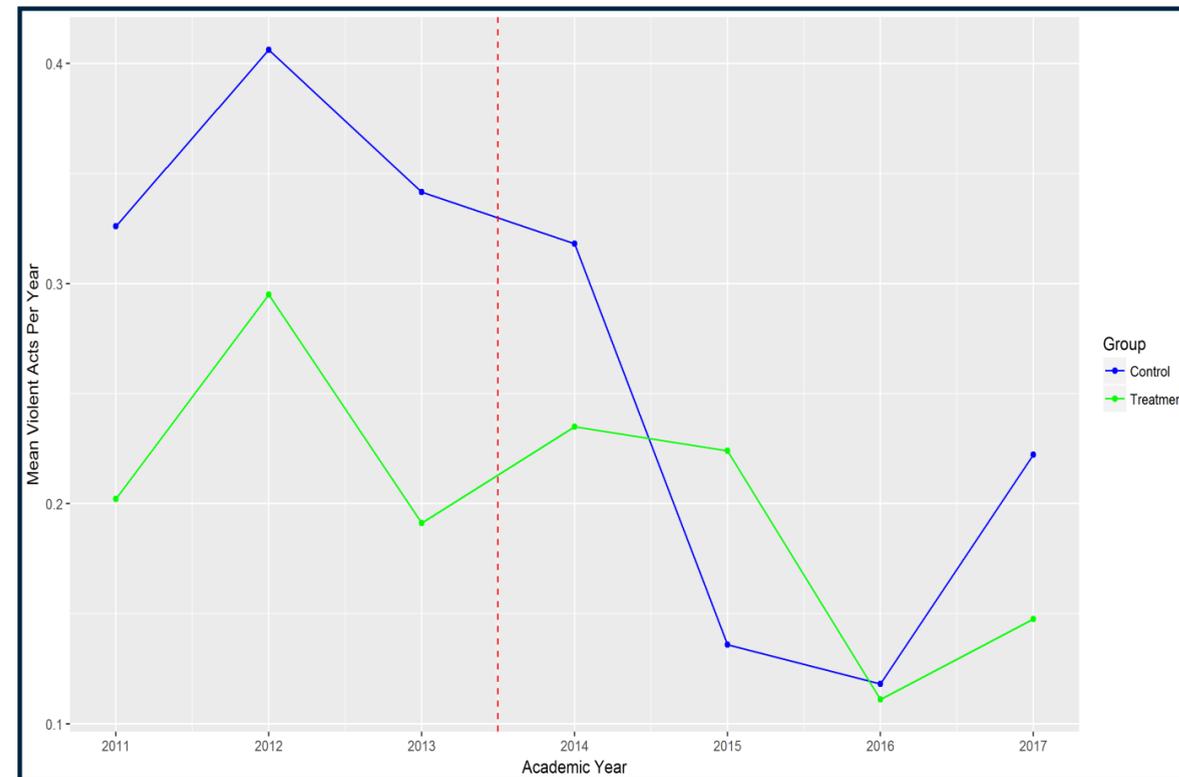
## Introduction

School safety is of great concern to many students, parents, school personnel, and policy makers. School resource officers (SROs) often play a key role in school safety strategy. Despite widespread use of SROs, safety outcomes associated with increased policing are unclear. The purpose of this study is to assess the effects of *Senate Bill 402, Section 8.36*, a Bill passed by the General Assembly of North Carolina in 2013 to provide matching grant funds for employing and training SROs in the middle grades.

## Method

This study examined administrative data of 460 schools in North Carolina over a seven-year period between the academic years 2010-2011 to 2016-2017. Since the outcome variable of interest, violent acts in a given school year, was a count variable, a series of difference-in-difference (DID) count regression models were analyzed to examine the effectiveness of the SRO policy. A model comparison approach was used to compare results between Poisson, quasi-Poisson, zero-inflated negative binomial, and hurdle models (See Zeileis, Kleiber, and Jackman, 2008).

Mean Violent Acts Per Year (Before and After Senate Bill 402)



## Results and Discussion

When using clustered standard errors for school and districts, the DID estimates in all models indicate that receiving matching SRO funds was not related to reductions in violent acts in any of the years in which the grants were awarded. These findings were true for treated versus non-treated schools and treatment intensity (per-pupil SRO expenditures) versus non-treated schools. Considering the vulnerabilities and opportunities to positively influence the development of middle schoolers, it is critically important to carefully consider the role of SROs in the middle grades.

## References

- General Assembly of North Carolina (2013). Session Law 2013-360. Senate Bill 402. Retrieved from <https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/Senate/PDF/S402v7.pdf>
- Zeileis, A., Kleiber, C., & Jackman, S. (2008). Regression Models for Count Data in R. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 27(8), 2-25. Retrieved from <http://www.iostatsoft.org/v27/i08/>.



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