

House of Representatives of the State of Kansas
Federal and State Affairs Committee
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612

27 January 2017

Committee Members:

I very much appreciate your allowing this testimony on the House version of SB 53 which would make permanent the exemption for concealed carry of firearms on college campuses and other very vulnerable venues across the state.

While I'm sure you have heard from many concerned individuals, I may be able to illuminate some perspectives that have not come up yet. I am currently the Chapter President of the American Association of University Professors and a full professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Kansas. In addition to teaching my core classes related to aerospace design, I also teach courses and perform research which is particularly germane to this discussion. Indeed, I am possibly the only ballisticsian and weapon system designer among Regents faculty members in the State. I regularly work for various laboratories and branches of the US Armed forces and law enforcement agencies designing some of the world's most advanced aircraft and weapon systems, particularly small-arms and gunnery.

So indeed, I may be uniquely qualified to see all sides of the "guns on campus" debate. It is no secret that the vast majority of faculty and students across the state strongly oppose having guns on campuses, law-enforcement personnel excepted. This is mostly because suicides, accidental deaths and rates of crimes like forcible rape are proven to go up when guns come to college campuses. Last week's accidental shooting at K-State just highlights this point. What may not be apparent is the long-term damage to public institutions, disproportionate threats to public safety and the potential for the enabling of terrorist acts.

The damage to public institutions has already come with the departure of faculty from departments that support the largest and most critical industries of the State. Indeed, Kansas is home to the top aerospace propulsion system instructor in the world. As he told his colleagues last fall: "The day a gun appears in my class is the day I retire." Because the best faculty members are the most mobile and nearly all faculty members object to having firearms in their classrooms, labs and offices, they will be the first to leave. Recruiting has become similarly difficult as many top faculty members from around the country do not even apply for our open slots. As an outreach specialist for KU, I have also struggled mightily trying to recruit outstanding students. A top student from Johnson County just contacted me two weeks ago saying that she appreciated my time, but that she had chosen to go to school in Illinois rather than deal with guns no matter how nice Lawrence and KU is. So KSA 75-7c01 et. seq., has already induced demonstrable damage by generating a very worrisome Brain Drain, certainly at KU and most likely across the state.

Additionally, many of us work in venues which are loaded with dangerous materials. From biohazards to pressurized gas tanks to jet fuels and rocket propellants, the discharge of any firearm could easily lead to disaster. There are strong reasons why firearms are not allowed in similar facilities which are operated by the Federal Government. Allowing guns on campus will place untrained, armed individuals in these labs. The threat from one weapon discharge could seriously endanger the health and safety of not only

those in the lab, but people in a much larger area, especially considering that often pressurized gas cylinders are necessarily found in biohazard labs.

The final very troublesome dynamic is directly related to some of the state's largest institutions. Indeed, these universities have very active flightlines and regularly fly university-owned aircraft. Given the current wording of KSA 75-7c01 et. seq., firearms will be allowed not only on the flightlines and in the hangars, but also in the aircraft themselves. The potential for this inadvertent enabling of terrorist acts needs no further explanation. Because this document will likely be part of the public record, more troubling aspects of KSA 75-7c01 et. seq. which directly threaten the health, well-being and safety of the people of the State and surrounding states need to be discussed behind closed doors in executive session and/or in private meetings. Accordingly, I will encourage you to ask me back to describe the exact dynamics of just how KSA 75-7c-01 et. seq. is inducing these dangers and how SB 53 and its counterpart in the House can mitigate them. Because KSA 75-7c01 et seq. poses threats to lives outside of the state of Kansas, it is imperative that Homeland Security officials be briefed on the dynamics of the law and its threat to the security of the nation. I would recommend that they be invited to these executive sessions as well to understand how the Federal Government needs to respond should SB 53 or its House counterpart fail.

So as gun specialist, long-time defense technologist and member of a military and law-enforcement family, I certainly support the 2nd Amendment's provision that members of a well-regulated militia be allowed to bear arms. With that said, I also see very serious problems with the current law. Sadly, it has generated some unforeseen consequences that are damaging and will continue to damage the industries, investments and youth of the state and are threatening the security of the citizenry of the state and nation. Accordingly, I very strongly urge you to recommend adoption of the House counterpart to SB 53.

Respectfully,



Dr. Ron Barrett-Gonzalez, Chapter President
University of Kansas Chapter of the American Association of University Professors

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