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House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

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HB 2055, Publicly Owned Building Security

Currently any building, public or private, can be posted prohibiting concealed carry regardless of the level of security provided within the building. Most public buildings in Kansas are posted even though no security is in place to keep illegal weapons out. Only the criminals are allowed to carry their guns inside. If the building is a school it is called a "Gun Free Zone." Note that it is in these and other so-called "Gun Free Zones" that the mass shootings have occurred.

I've been in your place in the past several years, listening to hearings on similar bills. I'm asking you to think, not to feel. Many will stand before you and pose "what-ifs." What if a person with a concealed carry license drops his gun, or lets someone grab it, or gets mad, or goes crazy. I'm asking you to look at the statistical evidence. We've only had concealed carry in Kansas for a few years, but it has been around in other states for the last 30 years. Concealed carry is now in 49 states. There's a lot of experience.

Florida keeps close track of crimes committed by concealed carry holders. In Florida it is more likely that an off-duty law enforcement officer will commit a felony with his gun than that of a concealed carry holder.

Concealed carry has been legal in all schools in Utah since the 1995; all college campuses; all high schools; all grade schools. There has never been an incident—never a misuse of a gun, never a stolen gun, never a gun fired accidentally or even dropped.

Concealed carry is now allowed on almost 300 college campuses across the nation. Before the Colorado court compelled all 38 university campuses in the state to allow concealed carry, in the years 2004 to 2011, the University of Colorado prohibited concealed carry on campus while Colorado State University allowed campus concealed carry. In those years undergrad enrollment at the University of Colorado increased only 0.8% and reported campus crime increased 37%. At the same time Colorado State increased their undergraduate enrollment by 9.1% and reported campus crime dropped 61%.

Overall crime rates in the nation are declining sharply while the number of guns in America is increasing rapidly. More guns in the hands of law abiding citizens has yielded less crime. College campus crime rates are generally lower than in the nation as a whole, but campus crime is on the

increase. In 2008 campus crime statistics showed **3287 rapes, 60 killings, 5026 assaults, 4562 robberies, and 9 sexual assaults per day**. Current statistics show over 30,000 on-campus violent crimes against students per year. On campuses allowing concealed carry there is not a single reported problem resulting from a licensee; no gun violence, threats or suicides, not a single gun accident or gun theft.

You will hear testimony today of how the presence of guns on campus will negatively affect the learning environment. Studies show, however, that guns are prevalent on campuses now, illegally. Right now about 50 out of every 1000 students carries an illegal gun on our college campuses. No one seems to worry about these. There is no security provided to stop them, and learning goes on. Likewise, on campuses allowing concealed carry, no one worries about the legal guns on campus but crime drops. If our campuses allow concealed carry, rapes will be averted, fewer innocent people will suffer, and constitutional rights will be upheld.

In everyday life, in the public, we don't hear about individuals that are carrying concealed, though they are present in significant numbers. We don't know who has a gun and who doesn't, and we don't think about it because we don't see the guns. But criminals care. Society gains by the presence of licensed concealed carry. Gun owners stop crime all the time, as many as 2.5 million times a year in this country. We don't usually hear about it because it is not deemed news worthy.

Of course there will always be isolated events, but statistics prove that concealed carry holders are responsible, law abiding citizens who take the task of carrying a deadly weapon very seriously.

It's time to stop fooling ourselves by posting a sign on a building which only forbids law abiding citizens from carrying. Meanwhile criminals are guaranteed unobstructed access for whatever purpose they desire. We are putting innocent people at risk. It's time to trust law abiding Kansans. Please support the passage of HB 2055.

Sources:

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Straight Talk from Senator Knox

Guns, Schools, & Denial

February 24, 2013

“Guns and schools don’t mix!” - A statement made by a school superintendent in a meeting that I attended recently. My response...? “I agree with you 100%!” We just solved the problem of guns in schools; or did we?

On school gun violence we are in denial! It’s time to face the real world and, in all fairness, the responses in that meeting with the school superintendents ran the gamut from the response above, to the superintendent with a concealed carry license whose students told him that they would be far more comfortable if he would carry in school. Many school boards and administrators these days are indeed facing the real world. They are studying this problem and coming up with answers.

There are many dangers in schools. Somewhere around 15,000 school fires occur each year, with damage per fire at \$15,000 average with about 20 injuries per 1000 fires. But no one is killed. In the last 50 years no one has been killed in a school fire. Why? - Because we prepare. We have smoke detectors and fire alarms; we hold fire drills and use good building practices, etc.

There are tornado deaths in schools. But the worst 10 tornado incidents were all before 1970, with fewer than 150 deaths listed in the last century. Why so few casualties? We prepare.

However, children are dying every year in school violence. In 1999, the year of the Columbine school shooting, 35 children died in school violence. In 2004 a new record was set, 48 dead in school violence. Two months ago, 26 more dead in school violence in Connecticut. There’s one main reason our children are dying in school shootings, we are in denial! We do not prepare. If we will use our brains instead of our emotions, we can figure out how best to manage the risk and solve the problem. Other countries, when faced with actual terrorist attacks on schools, prepared, made necessary changes, and completely eliminated the problem. There are many effective steps that can be taken besides putting guns in the hands of personnel in schools. But if you’ve got someone shooting in your school, a good guy with a gun is the ultimate solution. The only question is how many minutes of killing will go on before the good guy intervenes?

The legislature needs to be sure that local schools have the tools they need to address this problem. I am trying to get enabling legislation passed that will allow our local schools the flexibility they need to do whatever they determine is necessary.

It’s time to quit the denial and get our heads out of the sand. We must deal with reality. Right now about 50 out of every 1000 students carries an illegal gun on our college campuses. Most public buildings across the state have no security to stop a criminal from carrying a concealed weapon into the building. We put up signs that keep law abiding, licensed citizens from carrying guns and feel safe, falsely. The reality is that these “Gun Free Zones” are where the mass shootings occur. We keep legal guns out of public buildings with a sign but give little thought for the illegal guns that are already present.

There are more guns in America today than ever before and there is less crime. Statistics make it clear; more law abiding citizens carrying guns make us safer. Posting signs prohibiting concealed carry may make some people feel safe, but in reality the opposite is true. The most dangerous places in America are the cities that prohibit guns. In Washington, D.C., the most dangerous city in America, violent crime has decreased every year since the court struck down its gun ban. It’s time to stop feeling; it’s time to start thinking. We owe it to our children.

Email me at forrest.knox@senate.ks.gov or phone me at 785 296 7678 with your views on this or other matters.