



Testimony

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Personal and Family Protection Act HB 2055

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The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City opposes HB 2055. It is a massive unfunded big government mandate on local governments and the citizens they represent. The bill crushes local control and nullifies decision-making by locally elected officials.

A recent news story in the Kansas City Star reported how a number of State Legislatures, including the Kansas Legislature, are pushing back against what some view as intrusive, oppressive Federal policies, from ObamaCare to gun regulations. Senator Mary Pilcher Cook was quoted saying: "The people of Kansas do not want a command-and-control government. They want a limited government."

The Unified Government and the people of Kansas agree. Which is why Kansas voters adopted the Home Rule amendment of the Kansas Constitution nearly 60 years ago. That amendment is about small government and local control. Policy decisions which affect a city or county are made by at the community level by citizens elected by the community.

Many lawmakers here in the Statehouse express that the 10th Amendment of the United States dealing with States' Rights is being ignored by the Federal Government. I would contend the Home Rule Amendment of Kansas Constitution is too often ignored by the Kansas Legislature. Too many of you rail against the Federal Government imposing unwanted policies on the State, but then the Kansas Legislature turns around and does the same thing to local governments.

The Family and Personal Protection Act is such an example of big government forcing its views and mandates unto local citizens and communities. It is a State version of "command and control" government. It is certainly not limited government.

The issue of allowing concealed carry permit holders to bring weapons into City Hall, the local Courthouse or Parks and Recreation centers can and should be dealt with at the local level, community by community. The mechanism for those decisions is already in place. In fact some local governments have already dealt with the issue and allow concealed carry weapons in specified public buildings. The decision fit the nature the community and what local elected officials determined to be the wishes of a majority of the citizens living there. Other communities and their citizens may make a different decision. But it should be a local decision. Not an unwanted mandate forced upon the community by the Kansas Legislature.

The requirements of the bill are so burdensome and costly, many cities and counties will have no choice but to allow the carrying of concealed weapons into City Hall, recreation centers and other public buildings because they can't afford to do otherwise.

For the Unified Government, the cost of placing metal detectors and guards at the entrances of our municipal buildings would cost at a minimum \$912,000 upfront for the metal detectors and \$1.2-million a year in additional security guard costs. There's no way the Unified Government can afford that expense, so the bill bullies us into allowing guns in our public buildings whether our elected officials or our citizens want that or not.

But the most abusive part of the bill is paragraph (b) of Section 1 which says:

- *“No state agency or municipality shall prohibit an employee who is licensed to carry a concealed handgun under the provisions of the personal and family protection act from carrying such concealed handgun at the employee's work place unless the work place has adequate security measures and is properly posted prohibiting concealed carry.”*

So not only does HB 2055 let the Legislature impose its will on local-elected officials, it allows State government to intrude into the employer-employee relationship by over-riding workplace rules and usurping personnel policies.

HB 2055 is an unnecessary and unwanted big government intrusion into local affairs and allowing or not allowing guns to be carried into public buildings should be left to local elected leaders to decide.