

Date of Testimony: February 11, 2018
Bill Number: Bill HB2042
Testimony by: Sheilah Philip

In Opposition
Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chairman Bud Estes and the members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2042, the bill that would lower the concealed carry age to 18 years old. I have taught in Kansas community colleges for more than 30 years, and I am keenly aware of how 18, 19, and 20 year olds behave.

Even an 18 year old with training (per the amendment to the bill) is no guarantee that he or she won't do something rash and stupid. Teenagers and those in their early 20s often make irrational choices.

Science shows that young brains are not fully developed (in terms of wise decision-making) until people are about 25 years old. The synapses are not completely connected until then, which causes youngsters to make hasty, rash decisions that are fraught with emotion.

The National Institutes of Health did a study and found that the human brain fully develops and reaches full maturation at age 25. Based on their findings, they also discovered that because of this, it leads to risky behavior prior to full development state. The same study changed and influenced national driving laws, and a host of other policies and laws regarding how youth is perceived. Hence the reason why teenagers are 4 times as likely to be involved in car accidents and be in high risk situations up to age 25.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2892678/>

Let me give you just one example that I have witnessed. A teenager at JCCC, angry about who knows what (a bad grade, a teacher who didn't change his grade, or a girlfriend who dumped him) was walking down the hall throwing down trash cans and recycle bins as he went, and cursing. I called out to him to calm down, and he told me in no uncertain terms what I could do with myself (it does not bear repeating here). Had he been carrying a gun, I am rather certain I would have been shot. It was not possible at that time, but were I to witness similar behavior again, I would hesitate to do what I should do as an educator (try to calm the young man down).

This proposed legislation is bad, bad stuff. If you're a parent, think about the rash decisions your own teens have made, even at 18 or older. Don't put guns in their hands!

Thank you,
Sheilah Philip
Professor Emeritus
Johnson County Community College
sheilahp@mac.com
913-568-7231