

March 6, 2017

Suzi Ward

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Dear Chairman John Barker and the members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

I oppose HB2220 as a graduate student at the University of Kansas Edward Campus. As a student at KU, I have sat by and watched this unfold, powerless to do anything. I am a Missouri resident that has chosen to attend university in Kansas. I could have continued my studies online or at UMKC in Missouri, but I choose to cross state lines and go to KU. While in Kansas, I purchase dinner between work and school. Often times I purchase gasoline before heading back to Missouri. Not only do I spend time in this state as a student of a public university, but I contribute to the state by paying for tuition, fees, goods, and services for a majority of the year.

I have two reasons I would like to speak to about my opposition to allowing anyone to carry guns onto campus. First, we don't want them. Second, it's not safe.

First, opposition to campus carry laws have been widely found in multiple surveys throughout the state and the Midwest. In fall 2015 students and faculty/staff of Kansas universities took surveys on their thoughts about guns on campus. On the University of Kansas' website you will find article after article of groups that do not want guns on our campuses including the University Senate, faith-based advocacy groups, and faculty/staff members (1). Surveys were conducted in fall 2015 in response to the legislation passed in Kansas in 2013. The survey of faculty and staff in late 2015 shows that 70% do not approve of guns on campus (2). The fall 2015 survey of over 20,000 students in the Kansas university system found that only 31% want the exemption to expire (3). It is apparent that campus carry is not wanted by a majority of individuals represented in the universities.

A study published in the Journal of American College Health in 2013, "Student Perceptions and Practices Regarding Carrying Concealed Handguns on University Campuses" (4), surveyed students at fifteen universities across five midwest states finding that 78% of surveyed students opposed concealed carry on campus. A similar study published in the same journal in 2014, "University Presidents' Perceptions and Practice Regarding the Carrying of Concealed Handguns on College Campuses" surveying college and university presidents found that 95% want to keeps guns off campus.

It is the responsible thing to do for you to take the time to read over these surveys and studies. It is imperative that you listen to the people being affected by these laws. As stated previously, it is a matter of fact that firearms are not wanted on campus by the majority. At the very least, universities should be able to create their own policies that fit their student body and faculty desires.

Moving on to my second point, I would like to disclose that I myself am a gun owner. I have a hand gun for target shooting, a shotgun for trap shooting, and I have guns passed down from my father. I have handled guns ranging from a little .22 pistol to an AR-15. My father raised me with a respect and seriousness about guns. He also engrained our right to keep and bear arms. Along with the responsibility of gun ownership though, I realize that target shooting is not the same thing at all as defending yourself

from a violent person in a high stress situation. Conceal and carry does not prepare you for that. Target practice does not prepare you for that. If people are allowed to carry guns on campus, they had better be trained high-stress self-defense shooting in public. David Morris, author of Tactical Firearms Training Secrets and Guns and Gear contributor in The Daily Caller, notes that people "will perform half as well under stress as you do on your best day of training" (6) and that is "based in large part on the fact that most people's minds/bodies are SO far out of their comfort zone when shooting under stress that shooting performance becomes erratic and unpredictable" (6). However, now we need no training at all to carry in a public forum where people will be put at risk! Allowing guns to be carried on campus does not increase the safety of security, students, staff, faculty, visitors, patients, etc. when the person at the other end of that firearm has NO special training.

This bill would prevent universities from making decisions and creating policies regarding guns that provide a safe area for students to live and attend classes, for instructors to work and teach, and doctors to provide services. At the very least, universities should be able to make the decisions necessary to keep people at their facilities safe.

Thank you for your consideration,

Suzi Ward

Citations

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