



THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HEALTH SYSTEM

BOB PAGE

President and Chief Executive Officer
Executive Office

Proponent Testimony
Bob Page, MBA, CPA
S.B. 235
March 23, 2017

Chairwoman McGinn and Members of the Committee:

I'm Bob Page, president and chief executive officer of The University of Kansas Health System. I first want to thank this committee for its thoughtful consideration of this very important legislation.

In 1998, the Kansas Legislature worked hard on another important piece of legislation. It was The University of Kansas Hospital Authority Act. This law gave us the freedom to compete in the marketplace, and as a result, we have thrived.

Today we are not only the largest hospital in metropolitan Kansas City and the state, but we are also recognized as one of the nation's top academic medical centers. Most importantly, we have been able to extend the benefits of academic medicine to thousands of Kansans by providing hope and healing to patients who are the sickest of the sick.

To achieve this, we have remained committed to always providing the highest quality care and the best customer service in a safe and healing environment. This is why Senate Bill 235 is so important to us, and why I'm here today to ask for your support.

Without the passage of Senate Bill 235, we will be at a competitive disadvantage. We will be the only hospital in the seven county Kansas City area forced to allow concealed weapons in our facility.

Patients have contacted us with their concerns after seeing reports in local media. Some have called to say they don't want to be transferred to our hospital because of the possibility of gunfire, even though this law has not yet taken effect.

In fact, many people in the Kansas City area are concerned about concealed weapons in hospitals. In a survey of 500 registered voters in Wyandotte, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Atchison counties, we found 72 percent of the people surveyed said hospitals should be able to prohibit concealed weapons in their facilities. An even larger number, 82 percent, believe mental health facilities should have the right to prohibit them.

Whatever their political affiliation, age or gender, those surveyed did not want concealed weapons in hospitals. Even those who were gun owners said they did not want concealed weapons in hospitals. Almost half of the voters surveyed said they will feel less safe in hospitals if this law is implemented.



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In our Level I Trauma Center, we see many crime victims who are not just patients; they are potential witnesses in court. We also treat battered spouses and adolescents who are the victims of domestic violence.

In these highly charged, emotional circumstances, imagine what could happen if armed visitors were permitted to enter the hospital. Everyone would be at risk.

Our commissioned police officers do an exceptional job providing a safe environment for our patients, visitors and staff, but they are very concerned about potential scenarios. The last thing they want to see is an active shooter situation with multiple gunmen, when they have seconds to determine which person is the active shooter and which is the would-be Good Samaritan.

Our peer academic medical centers – Johns Hopkins, MD Anderson, Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic – all prohibit concealed weapons. Our clinical outcomes equal many of these prestigious organizations, but we won't be able to compete for patients or staff if they are afraid of potential violence at our facility.

The issue before us today is not about gun control or gun rights. It's about helping The University of Kansas Hospital continue to provide the most innovative, advanced and comprehensive care to the people of Kansas — in a safe environment.

Our focus should always be on saving lives and doing everything we can to help our patients recover, not worrying about violence. The thought of adding guns to this environment is simply incomprehensible.

This is why The University of Kansas Health System respectfully requests your support and passage of SB 235 for our patients, our staff and all the public health care institutions in Kansas.

Thank you.