

Written Statement to the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Mayor Carl Gerlach
SB 45 – Authorizing the Carrying of Concealed Handguns Without a License
February 12, 2015

Chairman Ostmeyer and members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs, the City of Overland Park provides this statement to address concerns with the proposed SB 45.

First, it is important to note that the City of Overland Park supports the current personal and family protection act.

The removal of the licensing requirement to carry a concealed weapon is concerning to our community. The license ensures that any person qualified to possess a firearm under either federal or state law has some required basic weapon and safety training before carrying that weapon hidden from public view.

In fact, we would support requiring that anyone in the State of Kansas who wants to carry a weapon (either open or concealed) receive the same level of basic weapon and safety training to ensure not only their own safety, but the safety of the general public.

Today, in Kansas, we require testing and a license operate an automobile because we believe that every operator must obtain a basic level of safety and operator training. The same should be true to carry and fire a weapon.

Finally, the City of Overland Park fully supports the right for local units of government to make decisions at the local level regarding the carrying of guns (open or concealed). The City cannot support legislation which further erodes, alters, or limits this home rule authority.

The cornerstone of municipal government is the belief that the governing of public affairs should be as close to the people as possible. This belief is exemplified in home rule authority, an amendment to the Kansas Constitution that was approved by the citizens of the state nearly 50 years ago.

Supporting the exercise of authority and responsibility by locally elected officials is a top priority of the City of Overland Park. This constitutionally protected authority allows citizens to shape public policy to reflect their local priorities and sensibilities within their own community.

Thank-you for your consideration.