



League of Kansas Municipalities

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TO: House Federal and State Affairs Committee

FROM: Sandy Jacquot, Director of Law/General Counsel

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RE: Opposition to HB 2353

I want to thank the Committee for allowing the League of Kansas Municipalities to testify in opposition to HB 2353. We believe that cities should have the right to control the concealed carry of firearms in our communities, but understand that the Legislature has made a policy choice to the contrary. This bill, however, would allow permit holders to carry concealed in almost every building and premise owned by the state, cities, and counties. At first blush, the ramifications of the bill are not readily apparent, but this bill will totally take away the ability of local and state governments to regulate concealed firearms on their property, regardless of the activity, with a few exceptions. LKM certainly understands the arguments of the proponents of this bill regarding public safety, but the principles of local control should be respected to allow cities who disagree to control their own buildings.

What the bill does in New Section 1 is to state that carrying a concealed weapon cannot be prohibited in state or municipal facilities or premises unless they have in place “adequate security measures,” defined as the use of electronic screening equipment and personnel at all public entrances, to ensure no one has a weapon. It also prohibits municipalities and the state from prohibiting employees from carrying a weapon in the workplace, unless the workplace is likewise screened. All of the exceptions to being able to carry concealed in K.S.A. 75-7c10 are only excepted if the facility is adequately screened. In addition, that requirement is added to state buildings, including the State Capitol building. No small city in Kansas could afford the equipment and personnel to meet this mandate, depriving cities of the ability to control their own facilities.

The problem becomes immediately apparent when one starts thinking of the types and numbers of buildings and other premises that are currently exempted from concealed carry. Every building owned by a city would have to be screened. Only the very largest municipalities will be able to comply and only for some of the facilities. Concealed carry could be allowed in city halls, libraries, day care centers in city facilities, any meeting of the governing body of a city, police stations and substations, community centers, senior citizen centers, polling places if owned by the city, community mental health centers and others too numerous to mention. Cities strongly believe that this should not be the policy of the state.

Already, if cities want to allow concealed carry on their premises, they can simply decline to post the facility as a no-carry facility. That is the local choice of the city, based upon what is consistent with the values and will of the citizens in that community. The decision, however, should not be dictated by onerous fiscal constraints where cities must decide whether to spend a great deal of taxpayer money to screen entrances to their facilities or simply allow the state to dictate that their buildings be open to the carrying of concealed weapons. LKM respectfully urges this Committee to **not** report HB 2353 favorably for passage.