

Higher Education Students Strongly Oppose House Bill 2353

Good afternoon,

My name is Tyler Thompson, a senior majoring in Information, Networking, and Telecommunications with an emphasis on information assurance at Fort Hays State University. I am the President of the Student Government Association at FHSU and am the Chair of the Students' Advisory Committee to the Kansas Board of Regents. Today I am representing nearly 100,000 students in the Regent's system to voice our strong opposition to House Bill 2353, the amendments to the Personal and Family Protection Act.

Let me begin by saying, without hesitation, that the college campuses of the State of Kansas are safe. You will find no better example of freedom than a college campus, yet our communities are tight-knit, family environments. Students across our state experience the same challenges – a lack of money, a rigorous course of study, and the experience of leaving home for the first time – and because of that, they help each other out. When a student stumbles, their peers pick them back up. This is engrained into each student from the second they arrive on campus. We are all in this together, and as a result, our communities are extremely safe.

In fact, it is not just college campuses in the state of Kansas that are safe. In the United States since 1970, there have only been 1.9 deaths per year on college campuses as a result of school shootings. Students are 7 times more likely to be killed by a snake while walking to class than by an act of violence at our universities.

I do not intend to be cold in the way I present these facts, but I am trained to look at risk when evaluating the security of a particular system. The emotions we feel from the images broadcast on TV distort our perception of risk, and we grow to fear the plots which sound the scariest – without regard to the likelihood of that event occurring to us or our loved ones. As a society, and especially as elected representatives, we have a responsibility to look past fear in designing the systems which protect us, evaluate the risk of an incident occurring, and allocate resources responsibly to mitigate the threat.

"When it comes to security, fear is the barrier between ignorance and understanding. To get beyond fear, you have to start thinking intelligently about the trade-offs you make. You have to start evaluating the risks you face, and the security options you have for dealing with those risks."

-Bruce Schneier, industry leading security expert in his book Beyond Fear

House Bill 2353 modifies the existing rules on the carrying of concealed weapons to include any state agencies which "do not provide adequate security measures" and further defines adequate security measures as "the use of electronic equipment and personnel at public entrances to detect and restrict the carrying of any weapons into the facility or on such premises." As we have seen with the federal implementation of TSA, there are enormous trade-offs of mandating the deployment of these types of checkpoints. These trade-offs include millions in increased

government spending, significant delays, inconvenience, and an exponentially higher risk of big government intrusion into the lives of its citizens.

For college campuses in particular, life for thousands of students every day would be a constant cycle of entering and exiting security checkpoints. Consider a normal student's day: You would wake up in the residence halls, walk to your 9:30 class in Building A (checkpoint), you get out of that class at 10:20 and sprint across campus to your 10:30 class in Building B (checkpoint), then you get out of that class at 11:20 and head to the Student Union for lunch (checkpoint), and finally, in the afternoon, you repeat going to Building A (checkpoint) and Building B (checkpoint) before returning to your residence hall (checkpoint). Except a college student's life hardly stops after classes. You might go to the library to study (checkpoint), meet with a group in an academic building (checkpoint), and/or go to the Student Union for a student organization meeting (checkpoint). Don't forget the (checkpoint) on the way back to your bedroom. At least the TSA considers you "safe" when you pass from airport to airport in a secured zone.

Let me be clear: college campuses do not need TSA-style checkpoints at every public entrance in order to provide adequate security measures to protect their students. We are unique from other state agencies in that each Regents university has an in-house police department trained to respond to active shooter incidents. Under the proposal in front of me, that is not taken into consideration. If this bill passes and Regents universities did not institute a checkpoint policy as described above, it would clear the way for concealed weapons in our classrooms.

The six Student Body Presidents represented by the SAC are unanimously opposed to the possibility of concealed weapons being allowed on our campuses. We have concerns relating to the level of training provided to individuals with concealed carry licenses, whether this training would be adequate to defend oneself without injuring others, the unintended consequences of having concealed weapons on our campuses, and the potential for concealed weapons to be detrimental to our open learning environment.

In recent surveys, 87% of Fort Hays State University students and 85% of Emporia State University students do not support the proposed changes to the Personal and Family Protection Act. Resolutions opposing concealed weapons on campus are currently working their way through the Student Senates of each university, and have already passed with overwhelming support at Fort Hays State University, Emporia State University, Pittsburg State University, Wichita State University. You will find those resolutions in the appendix to this testimony.

Take a moment to remember back to a horrific moment in American history, when the great President Ronald Reagan was attacked by a crazy gunman in 1981. For your reference, I have attached a series of still photographs from this day to the appendix of my testimony. I apologize for the graphic representations of such a painful day, but please remember the bill before us has life-or-death implications.

In the first photo, you will see that the President is surrounded by United States Secret Service Agents carrying concealed weapons. You will also see armed police escorts outside of the inner protection ring. In the second photo, you will see what is best described as “the fog of war.” In seconds, the six shots of that day have already been fired by the assassin, several people – including the President – have been gravely wounded, the President has already been evacuated to his armored limousine, and the gunman is already neutralized. Notice that no Secret Service Agent has even reached for their concealed weapon at this point – and the incident is already over - in seconds! By the third photo, agents are finally reaching for and withdrawing their weapons to form a defensive perimeter, expecting a larger assault – but the weapons prove unnecessary.

I would also like to remind you that the tragedy of the Virginia Tech shootings was not ended by gunfire, but by a Holocaust survivor who tackled the gunman.

There is ample research to suggest that even when shots are fired by protective agents, things can go horribly wrong. In *Just 2 Seconds*, the authors document a case where a gunman fires a shot at a protectee, and when fire is returned, it hits and kills an innocent bystander. In *Standing Next to History*, the author (President Reagan's Secret Service detail leader) describes a heart stopping moment when he comes a fraction of an inch from shooting a teenager who pointed a toy gun at him. If some of the world's most trained protective agents have these issues in the event of a close-quarters attack, how can we expect someone with 8 hours of required training will respond?

The honest answer is *we do not know*. Some people handle the stress of emergencies very differently than others (see Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*) – and we often do not know for sure until after an incident. If given the choice between putting the fate of our students in the hands of someone with 8 hours of training or leaving the situation to on-campus law enforcement to respond to, the answer to us is obvious – let law enforcement do their jobs.

In addition to the active response elements of law enforcement, college campuses have learned lessons from the Virginia Tech incident. Problem individuals are identified faster and by appropriate personnel for follow-up with mental health professionals. Campus-wide emergency alert systems are in place to keep students, faculty, staff, and parents informed – and as we saw in the most recent shooting at Virginia Tech, these new approaches *work*.

Imagine a 21-year old enters a general education classroom with a concealed weapon, and a female freshman sees that weapon and reports that “a student has a gun” to University Police. How does the proposed policy affect their response? If this student is told the weapon is “okay” – is she intimidated or distracted from learning? Where do students who live on-campus store their concealed weapons? What happens if someone messes with an unsecured weapon and it discharges on campus? If a student conceals a weapon on campus and returns fire on a gunman, but strikes another student, would that student be held criminally or civilly liable? Why offer some students (21 and up) the opportunity to “protect themselves” while leaving the younger students to fend for themselves?

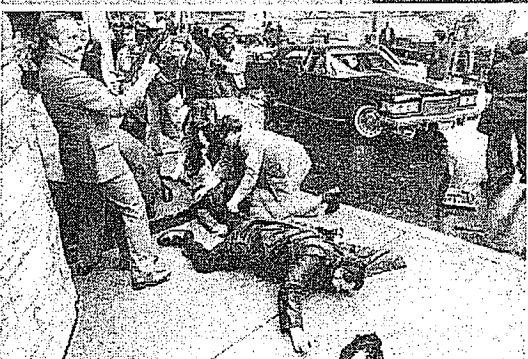
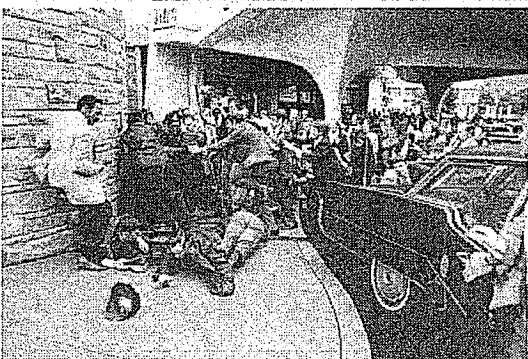
We feel the necessary risk assessments have not been completed to justify the addition of TSA-style checkpoints and/or concealed weapons on campus, and this proposal is unnecessary to provide for the individual safety of our students. It is vital that you consider the number of side effects this bill could have on the students in the great state of Kansas in the classroom, in the event of a crisis, and if that crisis turns badly, how to handle the ensuing tragedy. On behalf of the 100,000 students I represent in the Regents system, I urge you to oppose the amendments to the Personal and Family Protection Act.

Tyler Thompson
President, Student Government Association
Fort Hays State University

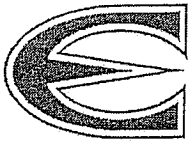
Chair, Student's Advisory Committee
Kansas Board of Regents

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(785) 628-5311

Appendix



1. President Reagan waves to crowd immediately before being shot.
2. Shots have been fired. The president is in the limousine to the right. Guards move in on the gunman.
3. Secret Service agents join the commotion while other people take cover.
4. Washington, D.C. police officer Thomas Delahanty (foreground) and Press Secretary James Brady (behind) lie wounded on the ground. Two Secret Service agents reach for what appears to be the gun that had been fired.



EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY™

ASSOCIATED STUDENT GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION CONCERNING
CONCEALED CARRY ON CAMPUS

SR 12003

ORIGINATOR: Luke J. Drury

Campus Community Relations

SPONSOR: Senator Hix

November 8, 2011

A Resolution concerning Kansas House Bill 2685

WHEREAS, Kansas House Bill 2685 would seek to address safety concerns on all higher education facilities within the state of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, Kansas House Bill 2685 would allow concealed and carry handguns on all higher education facilities in the State of Kansas. Higher education facilities could obtain an exemption clause if they implemented security measures that would cost an annual average of 50,000 dollars per facility entrance.

WHEREAS, the Associated Student Government and the Legislative Director conducted a survey of 124 students on Kansas House Bill 2685 and the results indicated that 82 percent of the student body was not in favor of the legislation.

Furthermore, the Associated Student Government is in support of the Board of Regents position on House Bill 2685 and would encourage the Kansas Senate to vote down the measure.

Be it resolved upon the approval of the Student Senate, and the signatures of the Presidents of Student Senate, and Associated Student Government.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

COMMITTEE VOTE

7 Affirmative
0 Negative
0 Abstain

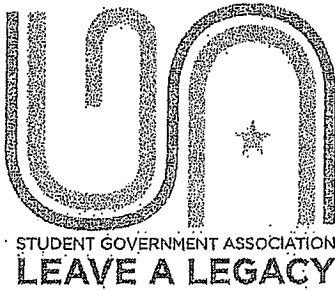
PRESIDENT,
STUDENT SENATE

November 17, 2011
DATE PASSED

APPROVED

PRESIDENT,
ASSOCIATED STUDENT GOVERNMENT

November 17, 2011
DATE SIGNED



Fort Hays State University Student Senate

Thompson/Hendee

Resolution No. 11/F/101

10/06/2011

Originated by: Legislative and Political Action Committee
Presented by: Legislative and Political Action Committee

Whereas: The Student Government Association at Fort Hays State University was created for the purpose of serving, protecting, and promoting the interests and rights of the students at Fort Hays State University; and

Realizing: That the Kansas House of Representatives passed a bill during the 2011 Legislative Session that would allow concealed carry weapons onto the campuses of state universities, unless the building had equipment and personnel to ensure that no weapons were on the premises; and

Noting: The Legislative and Political Action Committee has assessed how Fort Hays State University would be affected if concealed carry weapons were allowed onto the campus; and

Further Noting: That the committee has determined that if concealed carry weapons were allowed on campus, it would create an environment not conducive to student learning, life, and safety;

Therefore: Be it resolved by a majority vote of the Student Senate at Fort Hays State University, and the signature of the Student Body President that the students of Fort Hays State University oppose any measure by the State of Kansas that would allow concealed carry weapons onto the campus of Fort Hays State University.

1st Reading October 6, 2011

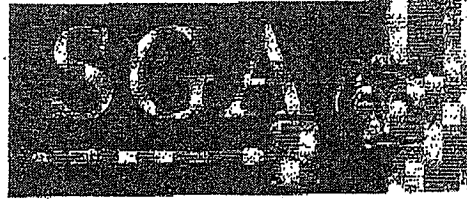
2nd Reading October 13, 2011 Y 17 N 2 A 1

President's Signature

Date Signed

11/7/11

Pittsburg State University Student Government Association Resolution No. 11-39



Date Submitted: April 5, 2011

Sponsored By: President Mills

Submitted By: President Mills

Topic: The Personal and Family Protection Act

WHEREAS: The mission of the Student Government Association is to duly represent the students of Pittsburg State University in expressing their viewpoints and concerns; and

WHEREAS: Neither weapons nor metal detectors seem consistent with or conducive to a safe and comforting living and learning environment.

WHEREAS: Universities are highly unique communities with distinctive security practices and needs; and

WHEREAS: The presence of firearms, legal or not, will complicate the job of police officers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE HERE ASSEMBLED: That The Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate jointly oppose any efforts by the Kansas Legislature to amend the Personal and Family Protection Act that would in any way allow concealed handguns on college campuses.

First Reading April 6, 2011 Y N A

Second Reading April 13, 2011 17-4-2

Association President [Signature]

Association Vice President [Signature]

Assoc. VP of Campus Life and Aux. Services [Signature]

Received by University President [Signature]