

Sunday, January 29th, 2012

Chairman Brunk and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Shawn Howell and I wrote this letter to describe a series of events that happened to me last year starting the latter part of May 2011.

I made a trip to the land that I lease for the purpose of hunting that is located in South Sumner County. The property line to the west is the I-35 turnpike and the property line to the south is the Kansas-Oklahoma border. My intentions that day were to scout for deer and their sign. I planned to put out some game cameras and a blind to hunt prior to deer season. Upon arriving at this property I observed a truck with a trailer parked several hundred yards off the gravel road on my leased property. I scanned the area carefully with my binocular for people, and found no one. I attempted to call the farmer from who I leased the land to find out if he knew who was here or if anyone else had received permission to be here but could not get a hold of him. But I was unable to get a cellphone signal. I then proceeded in my truck out to this vehicle finding no one in or nearby. I exited my truck and walked around this truck, wrote down the license plate number when I heard sounds in the distance and observed two ATV's coming out of the thick brushy area heading toward me. I was curious what these people were doing there and felt some anxiety as they approached but really was not fearful due to the fact that I had the legal right to be there and I was armed. I had strapped on my pistol after I got out of my truck.

When these two gentlemen reached me and shut off their ATV's, I said "Hey, what are you two guys doing here?" One of them with limited English speaking ability said they were surveying the land. I informed them that they were on private property and I was not aware or notified of any surveys and they would have to leave. The man said alright and that they were done anyway. They then proceeded to leave.

After they left, my scouting revealed that they had driven their ATV's all over the property and I assumed their visit was more recreational than business because I observed no survey flags or markers. I contacted the land owner after I returned from home and I was told that he knew nothing of any survey or anyone else allowed to be on the property.

About the middle of July, I returned to this same location and found the same two individuals standing outside of the same truck parked on my leased property. This time they did not have a trailer or ATV's. As soon as they saw me I could tell they knew there was trouble. I stopped at the bottom of the hill next to their truck. I parked on the road and jumped out. I was extremely annoyed and confronted them saying that I knew they were not just surveying the land and asked what they were doing. As I waited for some explanation, one of the men started to walk off to the side, not in the direction of their truck. That's when all of the sudden I felt like I was in danger and about to be jumped. I had left my pistol in the seat of my truck so I turned and ran the short distance to the cab and grabbed my pistol. I had to remove it from the holster and I then displayed it to these men and I announced that I was calling the Sherriff. I got back into my truck and drove back across the bridge over the turnpike and tried to call for help but once again could not get signal. I drove to the next mile road slowly, trying to get a phone signal. I was unable to get the signal. The two men drove past me on their way out.

This incident scared me pretty bad, and I feel like they had bad intentions the second time I confronted them. I was unable to find the tag number that I had written down in May. During the second confrontation I was so adrenalin charged by what was happening I didn't think to write down their tag number again. I told this story to a Deputy Sherriff and the game warden for the Department of Wildlife and Parks that is assigned for this area and was told that I should be careful because the game warden said he thought perhaps these men may have been cultivating marijuana on the property.

I am a bow hunter. As such, I am forbidden by Kansas State law to carry a pistol while bow hunting. I feel this law violates my 2nd Amendment rights afforded to me by the Constitution.

I feel unable to safely participate in what I enjoy doing most (bow hunting) on this and two other leases I have adjacent to the I-35 corridor due to fear for my life should I encounter these men on my leased land again. Furthermore, The I-35 corridor on any other remote place could host an array of shady characters that would possibly kill me, rob me of my wallet, check book, guns, truck, and leave me in a place I may never be found.

These men may be better prepared to deal with me should we meet again.


I pay a lot of money to lease land in South Sumner County. Costs include Licenses, tags, etc. I also host many other hunters on these excursions. At this time, I do not possess a conceal carry weapons permit. I have never really felt the need to conceal carry as I perform normal business functions as a plumber. But this is different. I am very busy and find it very hard to enroll in weekend long classes, background checks, waiting periods, and all of the intense scrutiny for me to carry a gun while hunting out in the country on my own leased property.

Please reconsider rewording or re-evaluating the law that forbids me to protect and defend myself in the Kansas badlands!

Please enact H.B. 2491.

You may contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shawn Howell".

Shawn Howell
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