

My name is Judson Jones. I am a life long Kansan, a 40 year Army veteran, and an extremely concerned citizen. I hold no elected office that would make me a voice for a constituency, however, I believe that it was Thomas Jefferson that said something to the effect, "all it takes is one good man doing nothing for evil to succeed." Members of this committee, I truly believe that our country was founded by people who were wise beyond their time, far-seeing patriots who understood that the people of their time would need a means of protecting themselves against those who would prey upon the weak. They made it clear that the citizens of this new country had a God given right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", and codified those rights with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The right of self-defense (i.e. the right to stay alive) is guaranteed by the 2nd Amendment with these words: "the right to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed".

Infringement means, surreptitiously encroaching from the edge. It is my opinion that any law or regulation that curtails or regulates the basic right of self protection by an individual for purposes other than safety of the greater population, must be considered as an infringement of the individual right to stay alive. We use handguns and to an extent, rifles and shotguns to protect ourselves from being preyed upon by evil people. I suppose that at the beginning humans used clubs to settle issues of self-protection. The man with the largest club and strongest arms would be the one to make the rules. Then someone chiseled the spear and then the arrow, now the gun to provide the necessary tool to insure self-preservation. In every case the people of the time armed themselves with the best tool to provide the best defense possible, and survived by using that tool. The history of our state is resplendent with armed citizens ultimately protecting themselves with firearms. The people of Coffeyville ended the Dalton gang's fear strangle-hold of their town with a pitched gun battle in the streets after the Dalton's attempted multiple robberies of the town's banks. When only bad people are armed, they always win, either by coercion or elimination, but they will win. Make no mistake, when a person aims a gun at you, an imminent threat exists, period. A gun is an equalizer. It makes the smallest woman equal to the largest bad man, if the woman can aim and fire it when an imminent threat to her life exists. Only armed, prepared individuals can protect themselves when confronted with an armed threat.

Today, we live in a different world than in the 1890's. We don't have gunfights in the streets of our towns, largely because we used the necessary deadly force then, when it was needed, to stop the destruction of innocent lives. Good people, armed with the necessary tools to defend themselves, have parity with those who wish to end the rights and lives of law abiding citizens, and we will only be able to continue our current life style if those good people remain on a par with the bad guys, who do not care who can carry a gun legally. Unfortunately, the social pressure that political correctness has exerted on legal gun carry has driven those who would desire to protect their lives and well being to think that protection is no longer necessary or appropriate. Current attitudes and policies from those who believe gun violence is the result of too many guns in the hands of too many people make the illegal use of guns the norm instead of the exception. Their argument of why do we law abiding citizens need guns when we have trained police to protect us, fails to take into account the real problem of protection is timing. It takes the police many minutes to arrive on the scene of a home invasion, car jacking, rape, or armed robbery. It only takes seconds for a criminal to decide if he or she will use a gun in the commission of their crime. The same thing applies to the argument about laws that ban guns from the hands of law-abiding citizens, because there is no way of determining if those citizens are qualified to obtain, train with, and use a gun in a safe, non-collateral damage manner. Those laws will not keep the bad guy from choosing to shoot you at his convenience or whim. The only way a person can guarantee he can protect himself from attack by a gun is to be prepared to defend himself with a gun. This pressure is manifested today by the posting of the "no gun here" signs at the entrance to all sorts of buildings and facilities. We all have seen the gun surrounded by the "no" symbol. This symbol tells the criminal "this facility wants no part of guns and you as a criminal will not have to worry that you will be confronted with deadly force should you enter and have your way with the people within".

By far, the most intrusive social pressure affecting gun ownership and carry is the insidious encroachment by government into the area of gun registration and licensing that is currently accepted by most of us as a means of keeping guns out of the hands of people not "suited" to have them. There is no law in the state of Kansas that prohibits people from carrying a weapon. Our State Constitution guarantees our right to arm ourselves for self-defense and security. It places no restrictions on who may carry a gun or how it must be carried. Recently it has come into favor that law-abiding citizens can apply for and be granted (for a fee) a concealed carry permit. This permit allows an armed individual the privilege of having self-protection available when he deems it necessary. It provides for the "legal" concealed carry of a gun and gives the armed person a sense of security that is liberating at least, and full of security at best. It avoids the obvious problems associated with open carry in that it does not offend or frighten the non-carrier. If a gun fearer does not see the gun, he or she cannot be offended or frightened. I realize that this is a simple explanation for a complicated issue, but it rings true, our society has put a stigma on the gun. How many of you have heard for instance, "five people were killed by a gun at the...", or "a man was shot by a gun yesterday during...", or "in this case the gun killed...". Guns do not kill people; people kill people. We have made the gun the evil thing, something to fear, and much easier to put away from us than the evil individuals in our society. How many of you on this committee own a firearm? Has it ever fired in anger and killed a person? How many guns owned by the people in this room have fired and killed? in this state? in this nation? Guns are not violent, hostile, or evil. They do not seek out, they do not plot, they do not carry themselves, and they do not fire on their own. It is not the gun that fires; it is the person.

Carrying a gun can be defined as having it in your possession. It can be holstered, slung, or at ready port. If the person carrying it is wise, it will be loaded, because an empty weapon makes a poor club, and it is usually possessed by those who believe that their security is enhanced by being armed. People carrying a weapon must not be automatically thought of as a "kook". Our recent history is resplendent with examples of bad people killing others with guns because there was no one in the group of good people being targeted who had a gun to protect himself, and as a consequence others in the group. Whether it is carried in the open or carried concealed, the gun is still there, and is still the equalizer. It makes no sense to say to law-abiding people you may have the "privilege" to have a gun, but you must be licensed to have it and carry it. This is a requirement for concealed carry. We have a right to open carry with no restrictions or governmental requirements. Why do we place them on concealed carry? There is no difference in carrying; open or concealed, armed is armed. Are we paying and registering for the "privilege" of not offending the unarmed? Is our society so afraid of guns that we are willing to place a premium on the right of self-protection? I fear this is the case.

In conclusion, I would like to point out, any governmental attempt to identify gun ownership, no matter how benign, is a step toward gun registration. Historically, gun registration allows for government confiscation of guns, and if, God forbid this nation enters a time of emergency and martial law is imposed, those with known guns could become outlaws, subject to incarceration or annihilation. Thank you for your time and attention.

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