



LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER
111 E. 11TH STREET
LAWRENCE, KS 66044-2990
PHONE: (785) 841-0007
FAX: (785) 841-5168

CORRECTIONS FACILITY
3601 E. 25TH STREET
LAWRENCE, KS 66046-5616
PHONE: (785) 830-1000
FAX: (785) 830-1085

KENNETH M. MCGOVERN
SHERIFF

STEVE M. HORNBERGER
UNDERSHERIFF

JAMES J. MARTIN, JR.
UNDERSHERIFF

Dear Representative Wilson,

I am writing to you today to voice my concern regarding SB45 authorizing the carrying of concealed handguns without a license under the personal and family protection act. Though I am in favor of the right of all citizens to keep and bear arms, I am concerned with the ability of citizens to carry concealed weapons, at will, with minimal qualifications. There are many areas of concern regarding the affect this bill may have on law enforcement should it become law.

Each and every day law enforcement officials have contact with persons in their respective communities in various situations. Some contacts are non-adversarial in nature while others may involve dealing with a violent and noncompliant offender. Though officers practice personal safety in most contacts with citizens, there are also situations which allow for officers to have more of a relaxed attitude in dealing with the public. If SB45 is passed it will give officers no option but to assume every adult they come in contact with is armed and they will be treated as such. Recent relations between citizens and law enforcement have deteriorated due to deadly force incidents occurring in communities around the United States such as in Missouri, Ohio, and as near as Ottawa, Kansas. If lawmakers and other government officials are trying to improve relations between citizens and law enforcement, then wouldn't it make sense not to place law enforcement officers in a situation where they always assume citizens are armed no matter the situation? This may have a very negative effect upon law enforcement and community relations.

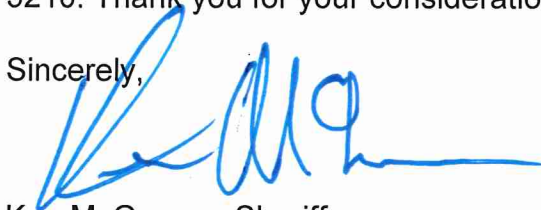
The current concealed carry law requires the individual to attend training and instruction on the use of firearms which provides them with information regarding how to identify themselves to law enforcement as licensed carriers. SB45 will allow anyone meeting a low criteria to carry a concealed weapon without training, without proper identification such as a concealed carry license or designation on their driver's license, and without proper instruction on how to react to requests or commands from law enforcement. For the citizen, not knowing proper firearms protocols may be deadly. For the law enforcement officer, being put in a situation which may require the use of deadly force based on the initial examination of a situation may cost him his career and impact his mental health for the remainder of his life. Neither of those situations is acceptable and both will affect the individuals and their families in perpetuity.

Law enforcement officers are provided many hours of training and instruction in the use of firearms and must pass a qualifications course before they are allowed to carry a weapon on duty. They must also pass the firearms qualification course yearly to maintain their law enforcement certification. If they fail the qualification course they cannot be a law enforcement officer. Oddly enough, with SB45, once that officer becomes a civilian again he can then carry a concealed weapon without any training or requirement to prove his proficiency with the weapon. Even hunters are required to pass a hunter's safety course before they can buy a hunting license. So, though we place requirements on law enforcement officers and hunters when it comes to firearms training, we won't require any training for any individual who desires to carry a concealed weapon and meets the criteria under SB45. Something is amiss with this scenario but it will be reality if SB45 becomes law.

Due to the various issues involving SB45 as it is written, I must oppose this legislation and I ask you to do the same. I am not opposed to the current concealed carry law and I continue to support it as I have since its inception.

I would welcome any questions or comments regarding this communication so please feel free to contact me via e-mail at kmcgovern@dgso.org or by phone at (785) 832-5210. Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken McGovern', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ken McGovern, Sheriff