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Senate Standing Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Testimony Supporting SB 45

February 12, 2015

Chairman Ostmeyer,

Senate Bill 45 allows any person who can legally possess a handgun to carry it concealed. Such a person can now legally carry a handgun openly and has always been able to do so in Kansas, with the exception of certain cities that rather recently tried to limit this constitutional right. I believe it is wiser to allow concealed carry.

Licensed concealed carry has now been passed in all 50 states. Kansas passed it a number of years ago. There was always the "wild, wild west" rhetoric when expanded gun rights were passed. However, it has never occurred. On the contrary, the opposite has occurred. Statistics show that as the number of guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens increases, crime decreases. As more guns are carried concealed, crime decreases. Though the media largely ignores it, there are many daily instances of crime being actively stopped by the use of guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens. Often this occurs without the gun being fired.

Recently, the courts overturned laws restricting firearms in Washington, D.C. and in Chicago. Interestingly, an immediate decrease in crime occurred in both places.

The contrary can also be seen in statistics. In the 80's Chicago instituted very tight restrictions on guns. Serious crime skyrocketed.

This data may be only anecdotal, direct causation may not be proved, but eventually it becomes obvious. Certainly in Kansas we have seen no wild, wild west when we passed concealed carry, when we passed the public building security bill (allowing concealed carry in unsecured public buildings), and when we preempted local units of government for open carry. It's been a non-issue, except that citizens now have the tools to defend themselves.

The lesson we learn is that a major strength of America is that government trusts its citizens. Our citizens, statistically, virtually always choose to do the right thing. We should only criminalize actions, not items like guns and knives. Law enforcement cannot be there every time we need them or even most times. We must be allowed the tools for our own defense. When this is allowed crime decreases.

Trust Kansans. I ask your support in passing out SB 45 favorably. Thank you for your consideration.