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Senate Standing Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Testimony Opposing SB 153

February 17, 2015

Chairman Ostmeyer,

Senate Bill 153 would allow public libraries which are not providing adequate security to post signs prohibiting law-abiding citizens from entering while carrying a concealed firearm. In other words, libraries which are taking no steps to provide adequate security, no steps to protect their patrons or their employees, no steps to stop criminals from entering with illegal guns, would be allowed, under this legislation, to prohibit law abiding citizens who are licensed, who have had a background check, who have received the training prescribed by law and have paid the fees to be licensed to carry a concealed weapon, from possessing the tools they need to defend themselves.

Current statute allows libraries to prohibit concealed carry of a firearm so long as they provide adequate security. Libraries are currently allowed, along with all state and municipal buildings, to exempt themselves from this statute until January 1, 2018. This has allowed them time to consider the necessity of providing adequate security and assessing the cost of doing so.

The majority of state and municipal buildings across Kansas have chosen to simply remove the signs and allow law-abiding citizens to carry in their buildings. Some jurisdictions have identified certain buildings that they feel should have adequate security and have invested in such security.

Upon checking in my district, all libraries have simply taken down the signs and allowed concealed carry. It is a nonissue with them; there have been no incidents. I know that many public libraries in larger cities, such as Topeka, have provided adequate security. In either case, they are presently in compliance.

It has now been almost two years since the public building security act was passed and there have been no issues. Law-abiding Kansans can be trusted to carry firearms for their own protection. Nation wide, 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. Nationally, 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.

Allowing the citizens of Kansas to provide for their own protection with concealed carry of firearms and with open carry has been a non-issue in the state. The lesson we learn is that a major strength of America is that government trusts its citizens.

I ask that you oppose SB 153 and trust Kansans. Thank you for your consideration.