

House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Testimony by Forrest Knox in OPPOSITION to

HB 2150

Prohibiting the carrying of concealed firearms in certain buildings.

February 2, 2017

Chairman Barker and Committee Members:

It's a privilege to bring written testimony about the Kansas statutes related to security in publicly owned buildings. I stand in strong opposition to the current legislation being considered, HB 2150, which would exempt the KU Med Center from providing for the security of the occupants in the facility, or in the absence of security, from being compelled to allow those in the facility to provide for their own defense.

I OPPOSE HB 2150 because it is ANTI-SECURITY. It would allow the occupants of public buildings, who have a legitimate need and right to be there, to be disarmed without any obligation by the facility to provide for the security of those law-abiding occupants. It would allow criminals easy access to a building full of disarmed citizens, with a notice of such on every door.

Kansas statutes now allow state and local governments to restrict guns in their buildings, disarming citizens only if they provide adequate security for them. Since this law took effect in 2013, most such buildings in Kansas allow concealed carry. There has been no negative effect. Governing bodies determined where security was required and provided the security. Everywhere else they simply took down the signs. IT HAS BEEN A NON-ISSUE!

Over the last couple decades, all 50 states have adopted concealed carry. During this period, no significant trend related to increased handgun accidents, increased crime rates, or increased suicides is seen. Actually, crime has dropped significantly. We have had huge increases of guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens, and THERE HAS BEEN NO "WILD, WILD WEST" as was claimed would happen by those in opposition. The most significant crime now is in the cities where firearms are most restricted. The lowest crime rates are in the areas of the country where guns are most available to citizens.

Signs do not stop criminals; they only stop law abiding citizens. But, concealed guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens stop criminals. Often no crime is even attempted by the criminal who thinks some bystander may have a gun. It is in the so-called "GUN FREE ZONES," where signs are posted, that criminals feel confident that no one has a gun to resist them.

It has been my observation that in recent years as Kansas has adopted licensed concealed carry, the public building security act, legalization of the carry of all knives (even concealed, including switchblades), and permit-less concealed carry of firearms, this has been a non-issue. There is no blood running in the streets. Crime is not up. Accidents are not common. Suicide (which is definitely an issue that needs attention) has not jumped.

As I have sought out the data, I have seen many accounts of crime being averted, lives being saved, rapes being stopped, etc. by citizens that have a ready means to protect themselves. We usually don't hear about these because they are not news worthy. There's nothing to hear about. The crime did not occur.

A key point I've learned in giving Kansas citizens a ready means to defend themselves, is that some elected officials, some government bureaucrats, some law enforcement officers are **more afraid of law abiding citizens with guns than of the criminals.** They've actually told me this. It is very concerning to me that these government agents don't trust you and me, even as government has no duty to protect us personally.

This is about trust. This is about the Constitution. America is exceptional in this world because only in America does the government trust its citizens. Only in America are basic rights guaranteed to its citizens. The #1 duty of government is to protect the liberty of the citizen. Liberty is what has allowed Americans to prosper at a level far beyond any other nation.

A police state is the only alternative to citizens providing for their own security. History shows us the danger in this. The chief murderer of law abiding citizens throughout history has been their own governments. The nations who have restricted the citizens' access to a means of providing for their own security, are the nations who have committed genocide against their own people.

In America, government trusts citizens. Citizens don't trust government.

Recently you swore an oath to uphold the Constitution. Please protect my liberty!

If I can be of any further assistance to you, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Forrest J. Knox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'F'.

Forrest Knox
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