

Dennis Arjo, Ph.D.
Testimony, HB 2220
Federal and State Affairs Committee
March 9, 2017

I am submitting this in opposition to House Bill 2220. I am a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Johnson County Community College (JCCC) where I have taught for nearly 20 years. I am also the President of the Johnson County Community College Faculty Association, and it is in that capacity that I am submitting this statement.

The JCCC FA is legally recognized to represent full time faculty members at JCCC. In our opposition to HB 2220 we are joined by the JCCC Faculty Senate, which includes part time faculty. Together these two groups represent over 800 professors who currently teach at Johnson County Community College. As faculty members we are in immediate and daily contact with JCCC students, and we shoulder considerable responsibilities in seeing to their education and well-being. The enormous range and depth of experience represented in JCCC faculty includes our intimate knowledge of the dynamics of classroom instruction and the many ways faculty and students interact. This experience uniquely qualifies us to judge the impact guns on campus will have on the educational mission of the college. Our professional and personal commitment to that mission, along with our dedication to the education and safety of our students, lead us to oppose the presence of firearms in JCCC classrooms, faculty offices, and facilities. Consequently we adamantly oppose any legislation that would further limit the ability of the college to manage its own security by limiting its ability to enact policies regarding the handling of guns on campus.

In the face of the pending expiration of the exemption to the Conceal and Carry Law, JCCC has worked as a community to craft what we believe are reasonable and expedient guidelines that will ensure that the presence of guns on campus will present as few problems as possible. These include rules, such as requiring guns to be carried with the safety on, that minimize the risk of accidental discharge. On no plausible readings do they undermine either the intent or effect of the Personal Protection and Safety Act. Nor can they plausibly be read to conflict with the Second Amendment. We believe it is the prerogative of the Board of Trustees and Administration of JCCC, cooperating with the campus police, faculty, staff, and students, to craft its own policies regarding the safety of the JCCC community without undue interference from politicians and lawmakers. In short, we strongly believe decisions regarding the security of an academic community are best made by those most intimately familiar with the institution and its governance. We therefore urge you to oppose this bill.

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