

Date of Testimony: February 13, 2018

Bill Number: HB 2042

Testimony by Megan Jones in opposition to HB 2042

Dear Chairman Estes and Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee:

My name is Megan Jones. I am a third-generation Kansan and an alumna of the University of Kansas. I attended the University of Kansas for my Master's degree in English Literature, and also taught 8 sections of basic English composition course requirements to KU freshmen. I stand in opposition to HB 2042 for a variety of reasons.

Kansas is actually incredibly lucky that no one has been killed on a college campus and I do not believe that we should push our luck by expanding who can carry concealed weapons on university campuses in the State. If I may be so blunt, we have seriously dodged a bullet. Literally.

Although the bill would require permits and training to concealed carry on college campuses in Kansas, it will allow 18-20-year-olds to carry, effectively expanding concealed carry on campus far beyond who is allowed to now. There are almost 11,000 Freshman and Sophomores at the University of Kansas, for example, most of whom are under 21 years old. None of those people is allowed to concealed carry on campus right now, according to K.S.A. If only 5% of those choose to carry on campus, that's 550 more people with loaded, hidden guns—increasing the potential for more gun violence. Where there are more guns, there is more potential for gun violence. It is basic math.

Secondly, the permit requirements in Kansas are not strong enough. An 8-hour class is the only requirement, and a person could actually pass the minimum requirements only having fired a gun for 25 rounds and hitting the target 18 times.¹ Basically, around \$250, a full Saturday, and a simple background check is all it takes for someone to be considered sufficient under Kansas law.

Not only that, but HB 2042 will legalize concealed carry reciprocity, meaning that Kansas will be forced to accept the permits of other states, which may or may not be up to the quality and standards that Kansas requires. Kansas permit requirements do include a few hours spent on the Kansas Personal and Family Protection Act—which are specific to Kansas law and would not be required for a person using an out-of-state permit. A person from another state who has also passed concealed carry reciprocity, with no knowledge of Kansas or Kansas laws, would be allowed to carry with their out-of-state permit and Kansas could not do anything about that.

18-20-year-olds have no business carrying weapons, especially on a college campus. If this bill were to pass, Kansas would be the second state, after Utah, to allow 18-year-olds to concealed carry on college campuses, per Utah's H.B. 198 that passed last year).² No other states allowing concealed carry on college campuses have allowed 18-year-olds to do so on campus, and with good reason. College is a transitional time for young people, and suicide rates are at an all-time high. Approximately 1,100 college students kill themselves every year, and

¹ <https://ag.ks.gov/docs/default-source/documents/concealed-carry-instructor-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=20>

² <https://le.utah.gov/~2017/bills/static/HB0198.html>

nearly 24,000 attempt it.³ One reason the numbers of successful college student suicides is not higher is because guns are prohibited on most college campuses, and guns are the most effective suicide method.

Additionally, guns fundamentally change the nature of an educational space. When a gun is present, it actually elicits aggression from those who are near it.⁴ College is a time for students to explore ideas, and part of exploring ideas sometimes includes getting really angry. Being angry around guns is a recipe for disaster. By allowing guns on college campuses, and expanding who on those college campuses can carry, we are creating the perfect environment and conditions to get someone killed before anything can be done about it. Gun violence is not an inevitable situation. Our loose gun laws are a direct cause of it.

Please oppose HB 2042.

Thank you,
Megan Jones
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³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3809451/#R23>

⁴ <http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037/h0025008>