

Testimony: February 11, 2018

Bill Number: Bill HB2042

Testimony by: Janet Hanson, RN, MSN

In Opposition

Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chairman Bud Estes and the members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Concealed Carry bill, HB2042.

I am a Registered Nurse, actively working for 39 years. My practice has been wide ranging and has included Emergency Department Nursing, Intensive Care Nursing and Public Health in a local Public Health Department in Kansas. I am currently a Kansas School Nurse. I oppose the idea of lowering the age of concealed carry from age 21 to 18 years because developmentally this is a bad idea. Young people in this age group are not ready for this type of critical decision-making. Additionally, they may engage in risky behaviors such as alcohol use and abuse that is well documented to increase confidence at the same time that it decreases competence. It's a lethal combination. I myself have a friend whose son committed suicide using a gun. My stepdaughter's good friend likewise did the same. In fact, we know that about two-thirds of all gun deaths in a year are suicides. There is simply no good reason to put concealed carry guns in the hands of young people. Events like these reverberate in the lives of Kansans forever.

Kansas already has made the restriction for concealed carry way too lenient. Our Wild West culture seems to say that education and gun safety are not important. EVEN THOUGH this bill includes a hastily added provision for education in this age group, it is simply not enough. At its foundations, this is simply bad policy, and adding an "education component" does not redeem it. In fact, it would be my professional recommendation that Kansas reinstate the education component for all Concealed Carry candidates age 21 and above and that they be subjected to background check as a condition of permit.

I ask that you oppose HB2042. Lowering the age of concealed carry to 18 is too great a risk for our young people, our families, and our communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

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