

2020 Learnard Ave
Lawrence, KS 66046

February 8, 2018

To: State and Federal Affairs Committee, Kansas State Senate

Regarding: HB 2042

Dear Senate Committee members,

I write as a citizen of Kansas strongly opposed to the proposed HB 2042. Already I believe that the safety of students, staff and faculty on our campuses has been severely compromised by the end to the exemption for universities from concealed carry legislation that came into effect on July 1, 2017. This new bill proposes to lower the age at which concealed weapons may be legally carried from 21 to 18 years. As someone who has been teaching people in this age group for the past 30 years, and as the parent of a teenager, I know firsthand how emotionally vulnerable and unstable young people typically are. I have witnessed many outbursts in my classrooms where the presumed presence of weapons would have made other students terrified and likely to overreact with tragic results. Even more often, I have spoken with students whose level of depression puts them at high risk of hurting themselves or others, but who are unlikely to have been identified as ineligible for a permit to carry concealed weapons. And I have witnessed hate speech from students with xenophobic, misogynist, and racist views towards students of color, women, and international students that in combination with concealed carry threaten to escalate to violent hate crimes including sexual assault, and murder.

I also speak as someone whose life was devastated by gun violence 13 years ago. I can say from my own experience that the families of those who die from suicide continue to suffer the effects of that violence for the rest of their lives.

As a parent, I wish you to know that this legislation, if passed, will ensure that my son does not attend college in Kansas. There is no question in my mind that the cost of out-of-state tuition is a minute price to pay for my son's safety.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anna Neill".

Anna Neill