

1309 Pinehurst Cir.
Lawrence, KS 66049
aboyack@gmail.com

March 6, 2017

Chairman Barker
Kansas House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Dear Chairman Barker and committee members:

I write to urge you, as a mother, a concerned citizen, and an educator, to please OPPOSE House Bill HB2220.

Gun violence is perhaps the most avoidable form of peril that we face in this country, and places of education should be a refuge from weaponized violence. This is true for K-12 public schools, but it is also true for Universities. I am a professor at Washburn University, in Topeka, not far from where you work. The university is a place where young minds are challenged and pushed, where our citizens develop into thoughtful, educated adults. It should be a place where violence is eschewed, a place where opinions can be raised and openly addressed, regardless of their unpopularity. This is foundational for our free and democratic society.

What is NOT foundational is some asserted need to have handguns on one's person at all times and in all places. This is a recipe for disaster. Easy access to guns can allow arguments to escalate into assaults. Easy access to guns can enable complaints to escalate into attacks. Easy access to guns imperils our educators and our students. Why in the world would you vote for this bill?

When our school discussed the implications of HB2220 in a faculty meeting, we soon found ourselves brainstorming how to handle shoot-outs in our classrooms. I had to excuse myself about 20 minutes into this discussion so that I could walk down the hall and vomit in the restroom. I am a mother of a four-year-old daughter and three older boys. I imagined leaving my children motherless as I was caught in the cross-fire in a university classroom. The image should be absurd, not a potential reality. Kansas universities should be a safe place to be. This should be a safe place. I moved here from the east coast to raise my children in safety. I now very much wonder if I should move back.

Chariman Barker and members of the committee, I implore you to do all in your power to make Kansas colleges and universities gun-free zones, or at the very least leave it to these schools to establish their own rules regarding the possession of firearms. Voting for HB2220 is irresponsible and shows blatant disregard for life. Please protect your constituents and their children. Vote No on HB2220.

Thank you,

Andrea J. Boyack