

Date of Testimony: February 10, 2018

Bill Number: Bill HB2042

Testimony by: Sara K. Kearns

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.

Expanding concealed carry of firearms on university campuses unreasonably increases the danger and liability of those on campus.

This bill expands the concealed carry of handguns beyond what the Department of Defense (DoD) permits on DoD personnel on military installations, where the majority receive regular training in the use of firearms. According to [DOD DIRECTIVE 5210.56](#), applicants to carry personal firearms on a military installation must:

- be 21 years old or older
- Submit a written application

After review “written permission will be valid for *90 days* or as long as the DoD Component deems appropriate” (emphasis mine.)

If the DoD does not deem it safe or necessary for personnel under the age of 21 to carry firearms outside of their duties, why is it safe or necessary for people on college campuses to do so? Additionally, HB 2042 permits the concealed handgun license for 4 years, well exceeding the default limit of DoD personnel.

As a member of the faculty, I am already responsible for the well-being of students, such as in regards to sexual assault. I am very aware of the number of shootings that happen on university campuses. Any time I see a gun on campus I am in the position of deciding whether that person is a danger or simply poor at concealing their weapon. Increasing the number of students who can conceal carry on campus exponentially increases my liability and risk. I also know from ALICE training held a couple of years ago on campus that, in active shooter situations, our campus police are trained to shoot the people holding guns. The increase of guns on campus means our police will either shoot someone who believes they are defending themselves, or waste time determining who the actual active shooter is. I’ll also note that in the case of a known or perceived active shooter, logic dictates that the more people “defending” themselves by shooting their guns increases my odds of being shot. Guns aren’t shields.

I have major concerns about more guns being permitted in campus housing. There are usually hundreds of students living in a building, with a Resident Advisor (usually an undergraduate student) assigned to a floor, or part of a floor; a Hall Director (usually a graduate student or professional staff) assigned to the hall; and, if large enough, a professional staff person overseeing a complex of halls. You are now putting

undergraduates students who are working their way through college at the frontline of providing support for all of the emotions, stress from school, and illness of other college students (not to mention handling underage drinking, use of drugs, and sexual assaults), and adding guns to the mix. The increased risk to all students does not make up for the perceived self-protection of those who want to carry a firearm.

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,

Sara K. Kearns

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