

February 13, 2018. HB 2042. Opposition.

Dear members of the Kansas Senate, thank you for taking the time to read this testimony regarding HB 2042. My name is Julie A. Gavran, PhD, and I am the Western Director of the Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus and a survivor of campus gun violence. As I have testified in the past, being armed the night I was held at gunpoint would have only made the situation worse and perhaps deadly.

A new argument in this campus carry debate involves sexual assault. 11% of college age women will be sexually assaulted on campus and 90% of those women will know their attacker.¹ 75% of people shot in a domestic violence incident are women.² College age women are more than twice as likely to be sexually assaulted than robbed on campus. Since the majority of sexual assaults occur between two people who know each other, among young adults under the influence of drugs and alcohol, carrying a concealed weapon would not be effective as a deterrent.

Recently, I published a study that considered the sexual assault rates on the campuses of Colorado and Utah – the two very states that permit campus carry. I found immediately that the rates did not drop, but rose at an alarming rate, much higher than the national average, and steady with the national average on college campuses. Since all public colleges in Colorado have been forced to allow campus carry beginning in 2012, the rate of sexual assault has increased 25% in 2012 and 36% in 2013 (15.2 and 20.8 per 100,000 respectively). In Utah, where campus carry has been permitted since 2004, the sexual assault statistics have fluctuated greatly over the past ten years with the last four years going from 6.6 – 10.7 – 9.3 – 14 (2013) per 100,000. The difference between 2012 and 2013 accounted for nearly a 50% increase. The national average over the past ten years has been slowly decreasing at a rate of approximately 3% per year (32.4 in 2004 to 25.2 in 2013 per 100,000).³

While these results do not prove that concealed carry causes more crime; it certainly disproves the argument that even the possible presence of an individual who is carrying a concealed handgun equals less crime. The goals of our state legislators should not be arming more individuals, but educating students at a younger age about the dangers of drugs and alcohol related to sexual assault and the need to teach individuals to respect each other.

Those who support campus carry argue that the states that already allow it have had no issues. That is the farthest from the case. There have been numerous incidents in Kansas, Utah, Idaho, Texas, and Colorado of accidental discharges over the years. The only way we are aware of those incidents are because of the media. How many other incidents have not been reported? It is not mandatory to report college did a very good job of keeping it an isolated incident, free of the press. No one was even aware it happened. How many other times has this happened, or suicides, or accidental discharges? Until the Clery Act is changed to include these events, there is no way of knowing.

Thank you for your time,
Julie A. Gavran, PhD.

¹ <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/11/domestic-violence-shooting-deaths-women-husbands-boyfriends>

³ https://issuu.com/facc/docs/vision_web_2017