

Sunday, March 5 2023

HB2412 Removing state agency fees for concealed-carry licenses.

Oral in-person testimony

Rep. Rebecca Schmoe (785) 214-1666 rebecca.schmoe@house.ks.gov

Chairman Carpenter and Members of the Committee,

My life is valuable and worth protecting. Your life is valuable and worth protecting. When a criminal who, try as we might, we cannot legislate into morality, chooses you or I to be their next victim of violent crime, we can all agree that our lives are worth defending with the most effective and efficient self-defense tools available today regardless of where we happen to be at that moment. At the end of the day, my children deserve a mother not a martyr, just as each one of your families deserve for you to make it safely home to them at the end of the day. That all being true let's not lose sight of the context of this bill. We are not here today to debate the legality or constitutionality of concealed carry for self-defense. That has already been settled. We are here today to address an embarrassing blight on our state which you and I here in the legislature have the opportunity to amend. As the current law stands, we are telling Kansans, and all of those watching across the nation, that here in Kansas you can get a concealed carry license if you are someone who can afford it. Sorry single moms who struggle just to put food on the table. Sorry veterans with disabilities and the elderly on fixed incomes. Sorry college student who is now out on your own no longer under mom and dad's protection. Your lives apparently don't matter as much, and your rights don't apply because you can't afford the arbitrary dollar amount that previous legislators determined it would cost for us to obtain a concealed carry permit and defend ourselves against violent criminals.

For those of you who admittedly do not like the entirely constitutional practice of permitless carry, and have admitted in this committee at previous hearings that you wish everyone who carries a firearm for defense would go through a concealed carry class, here is your opportunity to make good on that claim by removing the monetary burden which is proving restrictive for those low income families and individuals in your district and across the state. Now is your chance to promote that you were instrumental in the legislation that made going through the state approved concealed carry licensure process less of a financial burden on Kansans.

The fees associated with the concealed carry license are paid directly to the Attorney General's office and you happen to have the Attorney General's testimony which explains how his office will handle the shift in their budget when we remove these fees which have proven to be discriminatory against low-income citizens.

I will conclude today by urging you to pass HB2412 favorably out of committee without amendment, because having to pay the state to exercise an inherent right is always wrong.