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Statement to the House Committee on Federal & State Affairs  
Opposing HB 2055  
February 20, 2013  
John Douglass, Chief of Police

Chairman Siegfried and members of the House Committee on Federal & State Affairs, my name is John Douglass. I serve as the Chief of Police for the City of Overland Park and provide this statement to you today, in opposition of HB 2055.

Our opposition is noted on a couple of levels. First, the City is currently working through the public policy issue of how to regulate the open carry of firearms within the City boundaries of Overland Park. We believe that open carry is directly tied to concealed carry and that the two issues should be legislated together. Presently we have an opinion request with the Attorney General's office, which inquires as to the manner in which the City may regulate open carry. It would be the intent of the City Council to regulate open carry in the same manner as concealed carry – meaning that the same background checks, same training, and same permits required for persons to carry concealed would also be required for open carry.

Second, we believe that it is critical that the City of Overland Park should be able to decide at the local level, in which public buildings or facilities concealed or open carry may be permitted. Specifically, the City supports legislation that allows local units of government to prohibit the open and or concealed carry of handguns at public venues, centered around children activities, such as the Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead, the Overland Park Soccer Complex, and the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. This would be consistent with current laws surrounding children's activities at schools.

Past legislative proposals have allowed for the concealed carry of firearms in public buildings and other public areas unless certain safety screening mechanisms were put in place. Depending on the size and number of public buildings and facilities to be staffed and equipped with security screening equipment, the costs to implement such a program could become significant to the local taxpayer and possibly result in a reduction in other service areas. However, if legislated, the law should be uniform for all public buildings, whether at the local or state level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I would be happy to answer questions the committee may have at the appropriate time.