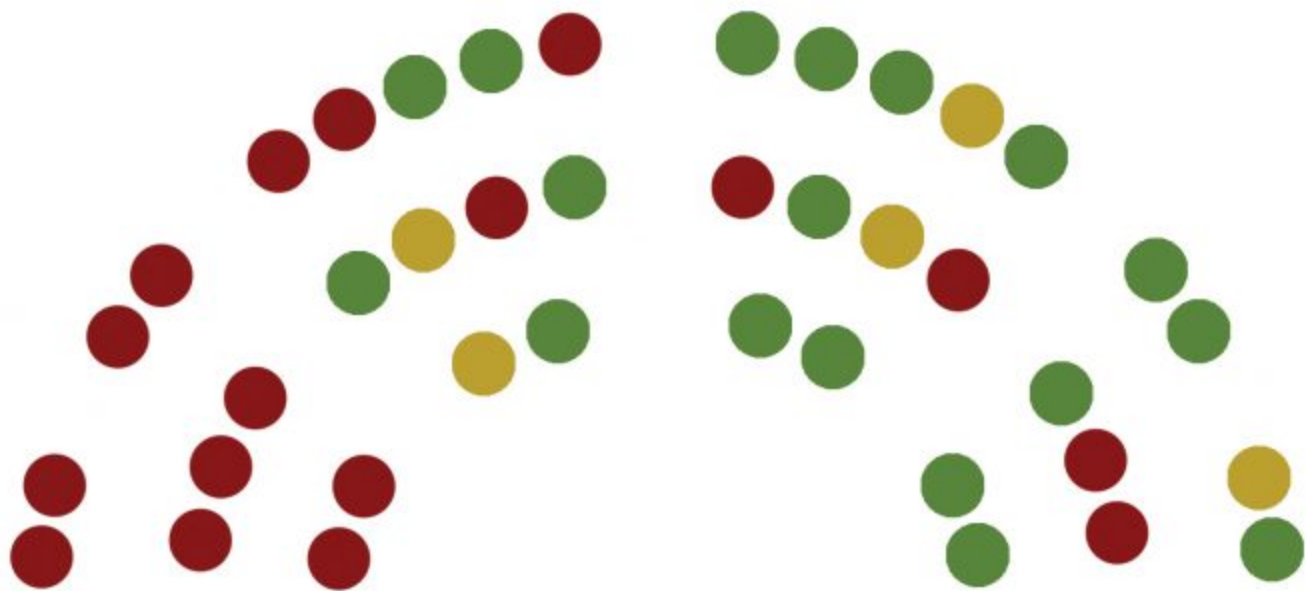


Projected support of campus concealed carry law reveals sharply-divided state Legislature

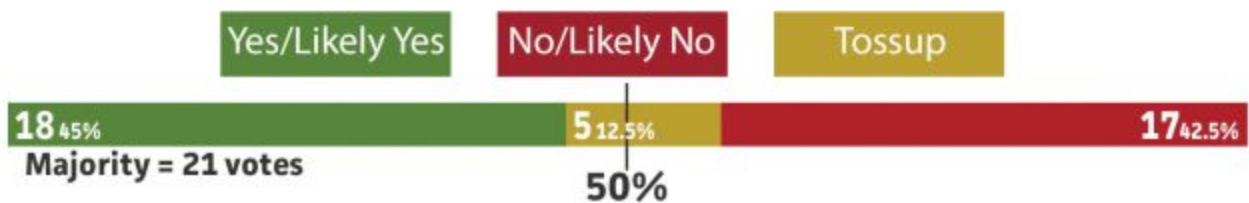
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Support for Current Concealed Campus Carry State Law



Kansas Senate



(Graphic by Alex Brase)

At least one of the two bills introduced to the House Federal and State Affairs Committee that would change the state law allowing for concealed carry in public colleges and hospitals after July 1, 2017, is [scheduled to be considered and possibly voted on](#) in today's hearing. If any of those bills make it out of

the committee, it will face a notably more moderate Kansas Legislature due to the incumbent-toppling 2016 elections.

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[K-State exemption from concealed carry nears end amid controversy](#)

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After contacting every lawmaker in the state Legislature and sifting through past interviews, statements and voting records on bills like SB 45, which [removed the requirements](#) for training and permits for concealed carry, the forecast of who backs the current state law reveals an inconclusive decision in both legislative chambers.

Outward support and opposition for the current law have yet to attain a majority in either the Kansas House or Senate. For both of the bills that are expected to be debated in the House Federal and State Affairs Committee today, the prospects of either making it out of committee are daunting.

The committee hurdle

Regardless of the bill that is debated, it will be an uphill climb for its supporters.

Twelve lawmakers, Reps. John Barker, R-Abilene; Ron Highland, R-Wamego; Tory Marie Arnberger, R-Great Bend; Francis Awerkamp, R-St. Marys; Blake Carpenter, R-Derby; Michael Houser, R-Columbus; Susan Humphries, R-Andover; Trevor Jacobs, R-Fort Scott; Eric Smith, R-Burlington; Chuck Weber, R-Wichita; John Whitmer, R-Wichita and Kristey Williams, R-Augusta, will likely vote against any bill that significantly changes the concealed carry law.

Nine lawmakers, Reps. Louis Ruiz, D-Kansas City; Stephanie Clayton, R-Overland Park; Ronald Ellis, R-Meriden; Broderick Henderson, D-Kansas City; Boog Highberger, D-Lawrence; Jim Karleskint, R-Tonganoxie; Nancy Lusk, D-Overland Park; Melissa Rooker, R-Fairway and John Wilson, D-Lawrence, are likely to support either one of the bills, according to

correspondence with representatives and senators, past interviews, statements and voting records. Reps. Vic Miller, D-Topeka and Tom Sawyer, D-Wichita have given no indication for their support or opposition.

Supporters of the current law

As it stands, the current concealed campus carry law likely has about 60 votes of support in the House and 18 votes in the Senate, both shy of the 63- and 21-vote majorities needed to maintain the current law, respectively. These 60 representatives and 18 senators will likely vote against any attempt to repeal the concealed campus carry law.

Rep. Jacobs supports the current law.

“A law-abiding citizen of the United States simply does not lose their constitutional and God-given right to protect themselves because ‘government’ or universities say they do,” Jacobs said in an email. “Common sense is key.”

Opposition to concealed campus carry

Approximately 49 representatives and 17 senators will likely oppose efforts to keep the law as it currently stands, both also failing to meet the needed majorities. These lawmakers will likely vote for any delay, extension to the expiring exemption or repeal of the current law.

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Rep. Linda Gallagher, R-Lenexa, is one of the House members against the current law.

“I hear from many people who are very worried about concealed weapons being allowed in campus buildings,” Gallagher said in an email interview. “This includes college students, parents of students, faculty and staff members, community college trustees and university administration.”

The uncertain fate of concealed campus carry

Since neither of the two definitive stances have a majority in the legislature, the law is in the hands of undecided legislators, as well as legislators who have not responded to repeated requests for comment and have not made any statements in the past that would indicate their possible leanings.

In the House, this group of undecided legislators consists of 10 lawmakers who could vote either way and six lawmakers whose viewpoints have not been communicated through requests, past statements or documentation. In the Senate, there are five senators who are toss-up votes.

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Lawmakers such as newly-elected Miller and Sen. Mary Jo Taylor, R-Stafford, fall into the toss-up category.

“I am awaiting debate and constituent input on the issue before formulating a position,” Miller said in an email interview.

Miller’s views were echoed by Taylor.

“At this time, I am undecided as to how I will consider this bill,” Taylor said.

The legislative session debate officially began with the Jan. 17 introduction of a bill by Clayton to indefinitely lengthen the exemption that public universities and select institutions currently possess.

A Senate bill to permanently exempt public colleges, which [The Collegian previously reported on](#), [failed](#) to make it out of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee last week.