



Grandparents Against Gun Violence Meeting Minutes August 27, 2018

Our mission:

We work to reduce gun violence to keep all children safe at home, at school and in our community.

President Judy Sherry called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm at Colonial Church in Prairie Village.

Charlotte Davison welcomed new attendees who are joining over 1,600 people in our fight against gun violence. Thanks to the 263 paid members.

Judy announced two ways to celebrate National Grandparents Day.

- Sign the name of your grandchildren today or at our next meeting on a gun lock pictured on the Grandparents Day poster for \$5 each; proceeds will be used to purchase gun locks for Lock It for Love.
- GAGV members are encouraged to attend Grandparents Appreciation Day at St. Mark Center, 2008 E. 12th Street, September 8. We will meet grandparents whose grandchildren attend the school and promote LIFL.

NOTE: this event has been postponed and will be re-scheduled as a Thanksgiving thank you to Grandparents.

Single tickets for the Fifth Annual Community Forum, "Gun Violence, Changing the Conversation," Monday, October 8, are on sale today and online. A record turnout is expected, so don't delay.

<https://moksgagv.org/community-forum-public/>

Barb McNeile reported that LIFL held its 47th event in August giving out a record number of locks at one event – 152 – bringing the total distributed in this first year to 1,000. Volunteers are needed for September and October events where you will be included in a team of a police officer and a LIFL captain. Contact Barb at bmcneile@gmail.com.

Kevin Willmott, film director, screenwriter (co-writer of *BlackKlansman* with Spike Lee) and professor of film and media studies at Kansas University and activist Megan Jones, both advocates against the Kansas Campus Carry Law, were introduced by Carol Rothwell.

Prof. Willmott gained national attention for wearing a bulletproof vest in his classes to protest the Kansas campus carry law which went into effect July 1, 2017 allowing anyone over the age of 21 to carry a concealed weapon on university campuses. Professors worry the threat of concealed firearms obstruct the free flow of ideas in classrooms when controversial topics are discussed.

Prof. Willmott explained that the NRA is selling fear, making people want to protect themselves by carrying a gun. "If everybody had to walk around with guns strapped on their hips like in the Old West, I think people would be a lot less comfortable with it. So, me walking around with a bulletproof vest reminds everyone that this is actually going on."

Prof. Willmott distributes a handout on the first day of class, *"WHY I DECIDED TO TEACH IN A BULLET PROOF VEST."* It begins:

I am a native Kansan having grown up in Junction City and attending college at Marymount College in Salina. It is difficult to adjust my mind to the current policy of handguns covertly being anywhere on campus through the policy of conceal and carry. This is not the Kansas I grew up knowing and loving. The Kansas I grew up in always had a level of moderation. It is in the spirit of that level headedness and restraint that I have decided to wear a bullet proof vest while teaching my courses this year at Kansas University. My hope is that it serves as a constant reminder of firearms becoming a normalized part of campus life.

One of the main elements to this policy that I find disturbing is the covert and undercover nature of the weapons being on campus. No one can know who has a weapon. Thus in the classroom we don't know who has a gun — perhaps no one does or maybe several people have weapons. We cannot ask and they cannot tell. As well, the policy indicates that the student with the gun "must have the safety on and have no round in the chamber." Unfortunately, this is an honor system with no one in authority being able to check the gun carrier to see if they are meeting this regulation. The gun carrier is on their own with the gun and as long as the instructor, students or others don't see the weapon – we must trust them with the weapon.

When Megan Jones first arrived on the University of Kansas campus in the fall of 2015 as a graduate student, she had no idea that there was already a Kansas law allowing hidden guns on public college campuses, although it would not go into effect until 2017. She worked tirelessly to prevent the law from being implemented including organizing at KU and other Kansas universities and making regular trips to Topeka. Although efforts to prevent campus carry failed on university campuses, there was success in that the law does not allow guns in hospitals. Meghan continues repeal efforts; in 2017, she introduced legislation reversing a gag law prohibiting public entities from speaking out against legislation. She urges us to work against gun violence by showing up, making legislators aware of our concerns, and voting.

During questions and comments, Representative Jerry Stogsdill encouraged GAGV to come to Topeka wearing our orange t-shirts. Loren Stanton of the Brady Campaign encouraged us to become involved in campaigns this fall and ask a question about guns when attending candidate forums. Representative Melissa Rooker noted more legislators are voting against the NRA agenda and encouraged us to stay positive – every success matters.

Judy closed the meeting asking for a volunteer to chair the advocacy committee and asked us all to call, call, call our legislators.

The meeting was closed at 5:30 pm.

Submitted by Charlotte Davison, Secretary