

**House Government Oversight Committee
City of Lebanon
Proponent Testimony – H.B. 272
October 24, 2023**

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. I am speaking today to offer my enthusiastic support for House Bill 272, which seeks to address a pressing issue related to concealed carry regulations in municipal buildings. As the Mayor of Lebanon, I have personally experienced the necessity of clear and unequivocal rules that protect the constitutional rights of our citizens while ensuring the safety and integrity of government proceedings.

Several years ago, our city faced a challenge that underscored the importance of having explicit guidelines for concealed carry in multi-use municipal chambers. We recognized the permissive authority granted to municipalities and passed legislation to permit concealed carry in our city chambers. However, this move led to a legal challenge that exposed potential ambiguity in the existing legislation, and our city found itself embroiled in a court case.

Our intent, then and now, has always been to uphold the constitutional rights of our citizens while providing a safe and secure environment for all. We believe that our residents should be able to exercise their Second Amendment rights responsibly. This includes the right to carry concealed weapons if they choose to do so.

Our experience in fighting and winning this case revealed the need for enhanced clarity in the law. It became evident that the intersection of different sections of the revised code could lead to unintended consequences, creating uncertainty for both municipalities and residents. This is why HB 272 is so essential.

This bill offers a common-sense solution to the challenges we faced. It clarifies the law and empowers municipalities like ours to allow concealed carry in public buildings that serve multiple purposes, including court proceedings. Importantly, it maintains safeguards to ensure that concealed carry is only authorized when court sessions are not in progress.

By allowing local governments to pass ordinances that align with the specific needs and circumstances of their communities, HB 272 preserves the principle of local control and respects the diverse preferences of our citizens.

I believe that HB 272 is a vital step in the right direction, clarifying the balance between the exercise of Second Amendment rights and the necessity of responsible governance. It harmonizes the laws related to concealed carry in municipal buildings with the state and federal constitutions and provides a clear path forward for municipalities.

I urge you to support this bill and ensure that other cities and towns, like Lebanon can operate with clarity, consistency, and respect for the rights of our residents. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for your time and consideration.