

On September 3, while recovering from ACL surgery, my oldest son threatened to kill me if I sent him back to the psychiatric treatment. After aggressively shoving me up against the wall I tried to call 911 for assistance. When he saw what I was doing, he grabbed my phone and threw it so hard across the room it went through the wall. I was four days post op, on crutches, non-weight bearing and my surgery knee was locked in extension. For my safety I went from our living room to my bedroom. My 15-year old who is 6'1 and 160 lbs. pushed past my 70-year-old mother to willfully and brutally attacked me after he yelled that if I was going to report him for assault he would show me assault.

I want to thank the people here today for taking time to listen to my voice. My name is Christina Smith. I am a single mom, a nurse, and a part-time student. Daily I live with multiple auto-immunes that contribute to me being physically disabled.

My life revolves around my three boys. We have lived in Sedgwick County since 2014. With dedication I have fought every day to make a better life for my sons, making sure they receive every service they qualify for in Sedgwick County.

The last 4-years, I have been unknowingly and directly impacted by SB367 that passed into law in 2016. These years have been a path of terror. SB367 allows grace for juveniles that make mistakes but this law has put my life in danger more times than I can count.

This last year, my oldest child was empowered by the **lack of consequences** for his ever-increasing violent behavior due to this **leniency**. We tried every service from therapy, mental health services, medication and the SED waiver. Despite all of this, he had multiple acute and one long-term psychiatric hospitalization. Still my child's behaviors continued on a trajectory path of violence, which put my family's safety at risk. The DA continuously chose not to press charges because they said there was no substantial evidence of my son's continued behavior. What the DA didn't know was even though I called the police many times for assistance and for everyone's safety, my son would threaten to do worse harm to me if he was ever booked into **JLAC or JDF**.

Our family life was filled with insults, put downs, foul language, and threats to be harmed or killed. SB367 ensures that juveniles (unless they are involved in a very violent crime) are never actually charged, and never convicted. No real consequences happen. The situation just escalates until "the-system" has no other options. Leaving the violent child offender in the same environment does not make things better. *Placing the violent child offender into the foster care system alongside children that lack parents is misguided. Foster care should be reserved for **Children In Need of Care. CINC kids are those** that have been abused or neglected which does not describe my oldest son at all.*

A minimum of four-charges of battery were filed against my son in the last year. All charges were dropped because of SB367. Our lives consisted of him threatening to turn me in for abuse

on a daily basis holding DCF as leverage. He was empowered to continue to hurt us since DCF only acted on his behalf without regard to my safety as a single physically disabled parent. I had no voice and I was scared and alone with no help from those who are sworn to protect and serve. Within my family, SB367 protected the very person who sought to harm me and my youngest two children. His increasingly violent behavior became brutal after I had surgery. Nevertheless, because of SB367, he is free of any accountability.

As a parent, I was forced to choose between two options: to be battered & possibly killed OR refuse to bring home my oldest son after getting him psychiatric help.

On September 28th, my son was to be released from St. Joseph Mental Health Hospital. But for the life and safety of my youngest two children and for myself, I refused to pick him up. I paid the consequences for his willful choices when I was charged with child-abandonment by the Wichita PD and my violent son was placed in foster care.

My son's charges from his violent attack and threats to kill me on September 3rd included assault, battery and criminal property damages. These charges were dropped by the DA on November 8th, I think this is because SB367 removed the DA's options.

How many people like me must choose between life-threatening violence in the home or be charged with child abandonment which then threatens them with losing their other kids?

What are we teaching juveniles in Sedgwick County? Willfully violent juveniles are being empowered by the lack of consequences for their actions.

If you asked my smart, resilient middle-son, who is 11, what he learned and observed over the last four years of terror, pain, chaos, and hopelessness, he would bravely look you in the eye and tell you that those in authority do not care for his or his family's safety.

In this last year, SB367 has caused my family to lose our home, subjected us to constant attacks, severe financial strain, and stripped us of our right to safety and protection.

SB367 protected my oldest son and empowered him to terrorize his two little brothers, his grandmother, me and my service-dog.

My name is Christina Smith. I am a mother with a deep love for her three sons. I am not just a survivor but a thriver who not only believes in Grace but also for accountability. Please put common sense back into the law.

Thank you for hearing my voice today.