

Date: February 13, 2023

From: Paula Mitchell, Victim Advocate, BrightHouse

Ref: Support for including the decriminalization of test strips for GHA (date rape drug) in HB 2328

My name is Paula Mitchell. I am a Victim Advocate with BrightHouse, Inc. the domestic violence and sexual assault support center that serves Rice, Reno, Kingman and Harper counties in Kansas. If it were possible for test strips for GHA to be carried and used it would give people a very good weapon against being unknowingly drugged against their will by predators. We help victims of this crime frequently and it has been happening for decades.

In the mid 1990's, I was in my second year of college. After winning a basketball game against our biggest rival, a group of my friends and I went to a party at a players' house. I did not drink so I was the designated driver. I had finished a Dr. Pepper, and one of the basketball players asked if I wanted something else. I said I did not drink, but if you have a pop or water, that would be great. He came out of the kitchen with a can of Dr. Pepper that was already opened.

I got halfway through the can, and I started feeling dizzy and almost like I was drunk. I went to the bathroom and splashed some water on my face but I did not feel any better. A player asked if I felt OK and told me no one was using a room and I could lay down there. I could not move my body, and things were spinning.

I remember kind of coming to, and four basketball players were in the room. One of the guys was stroking my head saying it would be over soon. They all took turns raping me. I was in and out of consciousness and I could not move or scream. Much later, I got up and went back to my dorm room and cried for a while. The school dealt with it internally.

It is the main reason why I do what I do with BrightHouse.

I have a 21-year-old daughter and a couple of weeks ago, I went with her and some friends to a club in Derby as the designated driver. I saw a man drop something into our drinks when we were away from our table, and the club tested the drinks and held him until the police came.

BrightHouse is working with 4 high school girls in our service area who were drugged and raped by a man in his mid-twenties in separate incidents. Predators use these drugs to trap and immobilize their victims.

Test strips would allow people to test their drinks before it is too late, and we hope you will allow our daughters this defense mechanism. It could make a real difference.