

Date: 2/19/2023

Bill number: HB2304

Proponent
Tammy Bartels
Speaking for self

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 2304

As I shared with your colleagues in the Senate, I am a certified firearms instructor, a mother, and a grandmother. I am also a long time advocate of public schools in the state of Kansas.

I know the value of education in general, and safety education in particular. I have taught gun safety classes to youth and their parents that includes information on what to do if a friend brings a gun to school. We talk about who to go to and the dangers of handing a firearm without a trusted adult present. We review safety and teach both the parent and youth how a gun works. These classes help remove the mysticism of guns and have helped the students be better prepared and safer if they are presented with an unsecured firearm.

I have also advocated for public education for many years as a member of the Kansas Parent Teacher Association and believe that knowledge and education are the greatest gifts we can give young people. While my children are grown and my granddaughter is not quite school aged, my daughter is an administrator at an area high school. I am still a passionate advocate for public school education and believe that this bill will help make schools a safer place by educating our young people and removing that mysticism I mentioned earlier.

Some have expressed concerns about teaching children about guns, but their concerns are misplaced. We teach children to Stop, Drop, and Roll, we partner with local law enforcement to present the DARE program, we talk about stranger danger, and so many other things to help keep them safe if they should find themselves in a bad situation. Offering educational curriculum on firearm safety is the same thing. It is giving youth a tool that they can use should they ever need it. While every child who goes through the program may not practice what they have learned, many others will, just as some kids end up using drugs despite taking DARE. Isn't it better to try to reach as many kids as possible instead of sitting back and doing nothing?

I have also read the Fiscal Note for this bill. During my time as Kansas PTA President, I sat on a couple of different curriculum committees for the Department of Education. We never met more than twice in person and most of the work was conducted via electronic means. Since this bill calls for the new curriculum to be based of existing curriculum that is both tested and respected, I do not expect that the process will be as time consuming and expensive as some other committee's work. While there will certainly be a cost associated with the implementation, it will be far eclipsed by the value of teaching our students how to be safe and responsible around a gun should the need present itself.

Thank you for your time and consideration.