

Dear Chairman Carpenter, Committee members and staff.

I stand before you today to strongly oppose House Concurrent Resolution 5020, a proposed amendment to the Kansas constitution that could severely restrict future modifications to our state's gun laws. While we already have the language in place preserving the constitutional right to bear arms, it is imperative to consider the far-reaching consequences that may stem from hindering our ability to address the pressing issue of firearm-related deaths and the subsequent economic repercussions.

Kansas currently ranks among the least restrictive states nationwide concerning public safety regulations on firearms, despite a significant majority of Kansans supporting more robust measures. The Kansas Reflector reported in an October 31, 2022 results from the 2022 Kansas Speaks survey stating: "Three of every four Kansans taking part in a statewide survey support a minimum age of 21 to purchase a firearm and endorsed a prohibition on sales of guns to people convicted of violent misdemeanors or anyone reported as dangerous to law enforcement by a mental health provider." ([October 31, 2022](#)) The statewide poll further revealed that Kansans strongly support background checks and mandated three-day waiting periods with purchases.

The data and facts, coupled with poignant stories of lives shattered by gun violence, have been presented to you repeatedly. Firearms stand as the leading cause of death among children and teens in Kansas. Yet, here we are. Today, I bring forth an aspect of gun violence that may resonate more for you—an economic perspective. According to a comprehensive analysis, Kansas bears the 22nd highest per-resident cost of gun violence in the United States, totaling \$5.7 billion annually, with taxpayers shouldering \$95.1 million of this burden ([Source](#): Ted R. Miller and Bruce Lawrence Analysis of CDC Fatal Injury: 2019 and HCUP Nonfatal Injury: 2019).

The charts below provide a detailed breakdown on firearm suicides, for an example, which constitute 68% of firearm deaths in Kansas. Understanding the broader societal impact is crucial when contemplating the consequences of easing firearm access. The economic toll encompasses medical expenses, lost productivity in the workforce, strain on law enforcement resources and medical personnel, as well as the ongoing need for mental health care and quality-of-life costs. Curtailing our ability to adapt and strengthen gun laws as needed risks perpetuating a cycle of violence that directly affects our state's economic well-being.

Moreover, the adoption of legal terms such as "strict scrutiny" in other states has incurred extraordinary costs, extending beyond lives lost. The legal system has grappled with defending public safety measures that were previously in place, protecting survivors of domestic violence and preventing dangerous individuals from possessing firearms. This is an imperative and life-saving measure, yet moving forward with HCR 5020 could burden our courts and legal resources, adding to this financial deficit that is laid out here.

We must also be diligent and ask "What does the firearm industry do for Kansas?" In a report published in 2022 by WalletHub, Kansas is ranked the 13th highest state relying on the firearm industry. This is weighted on metrics such as: gun industry immunity, least restrictive gun laws

and having low minimum age to purchase and possess firearms ([WalletHub report June 9, 2022](#).) Despite this high dependency, Kansas ranks 4th lowest in taxes paid by the firearms industry per capita and 12th lowest production in the country. While raking in millions, the industry contributes minimally to our economic value. When taking into account wages, taxes, and indirect contributions, the firearm industry in Kansas contributed the 15th lowest amount among states ([Firearm and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact report](#).) Firearm dealers in Kansas are subject to little oversight, with no state license fees required while small business owners and other hard working-Kansans have much higher burdens to meet. Cosmetologists, barbers, store-front owners, restaurants and food trucks, all jump through costly hoops to maintain their livelihoods while firearm dealers have little to no oversight or fees and are profiting substantially.

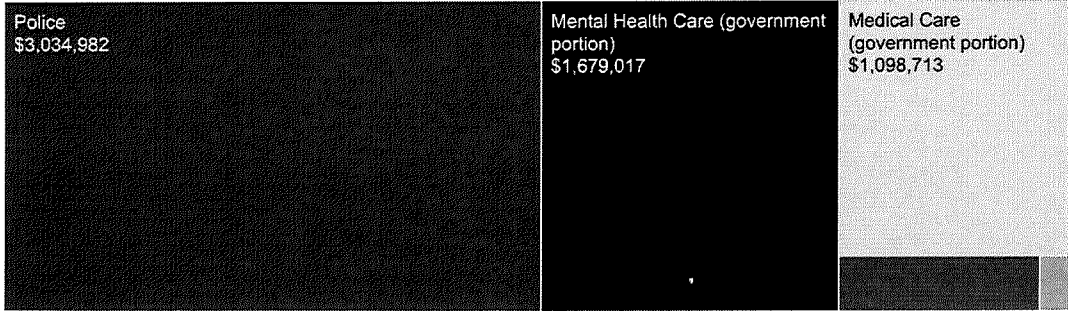
In conclusion, I implore you to oppose HCR 5020. The data unequivocally exposes the adverse consequences of lax firearm regulations on public safety and the economy. It is our duty to prioritize the safety and well-being of our citizens by retaining the flexibility to address evolving challenges related to firearm violence while fostering a thriving economy.

Respectfully,  
Danielle Twemlow  
Topeka, KS

\*Note: sources are hyperlinked for your convenience.

Calculator Cost Breakdown Cost to Taxpayers

Cost to taxpayers for 311 gun deaths and 23 nonfatal gun injuries (Suicide or Suicide Attempt) in Kansas.



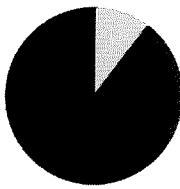
Criminal Justice	\$0
Emergency Transport	\$198,631
Medical Care (government portion)	\$1,098,713
Mental Health Care (government portion)	\$1,679,017
Police	\$3,034,982
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	\$34,751

**Total cost to taxpayers: \$6,046,095**

Calculator Cost Breakdown Cost to Taxpayers

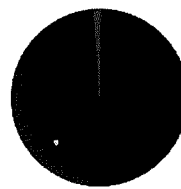
Cost to society for 311 gun deaths and 23 nonfatal gun injuries (Suicide or Suicide Attempt) in Kansas.

Cost by Category



Direct Costs  
 Work-Loss Costs  
 Quality-of-Life Costs

Cost by Severity



Gun Deaths  
 Gun Injuries

Emergency Transport	\$198,631
Medical Care	\$2,605,024
Mental Health Care	\$4,197,265
Police	\$3,034,982
Criminal Justice	\$0
Employer	\$3,291,020
Work-Loss Costs	\$340,926,557
Quality-of-Life Costs	\$3,071,982,826

**Total cost to Kansas: \$3,426,236,320**

