

Chairman Barker and Committee members,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my story. My name is Tracy Meredith. My husband Clint and I live in Fairway, Kansas. We have two daughters. A 7 and 11 year old.

On November 26, 2017 my family went to Costco after church to pick up a few things. As I was waiting for my husband to meet us in the back of the store, a rush of people began to scream and run towards us. A man yells "active shooter get down." As a mom all I want to do is protect my children. I immediately push them to the ground, stuff them under the meat counter and protect them with my body. I wait 15 seconds. Once I don't hear any gunshots I pop my head up assess the area and quickly make a run for the back of the store. The active shooter was shot down by an off duty police officer who happened to be shopping in the store. It was just 20 feet from where I stuffed my kids under the counter. Days after the shooting I would jump at any loud noise. I didn't go in public for a week. It took weeks to get back to a new type of normal.

I wish the story ended there. My kids were exposed once again to gun violence when Highlands Elementary school was put on lock down last week. My youngest was on the playground when shots were fired. She told me that she heard a crash and thought it was the flag pole coming down. Thank god she had no idea that it was bullets coming towards the school. One hit the 3rd grade window and the other hit a van window in the parking lot. I am so thankful for her teachers and staff that were well trained and acted calmly so my daughter wouldn't be emotionally scared permanently from this horrific event. An out of town friend suggest I move, I told her I live in one of the most safest communities in Kansas.

Gun violence has affected me, now my friends/neighbors and my community. That's why I oppose HB 2326. Let's start protecting not only my community but our state as a whole instead of taking a step backwards.