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Testimony to the House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice in Opposition to House Bill 2030

January 20, 2021

Chairman Jennings, Vice Chair Owens, Ranking Member Highberger, and Members of the Committee:

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office is in opposition to **HB 2030**. Our criminal justice system protects the rights of the accused, but it often fails to protect the rights of the crime victim. Quite frankly, an extension of time for a medical release is an affront to crime victims in Kansas. While a perpetrator gets a reprieve from his or her sentence, the crime victim and/or crime victim's family does not. They will forever live with the consequences of the crime committed. There is no reprieve for medical reasons, or for any reason.

The family of a murder victim does not ever get their loved one back. The victim of a sexual assault does not ever forget the terrible offense that was done them. There is no "get out of jail free" card for a crime victim. A crime victim serves a life sentence without the possibility of parole and carries the burden and scars of the crime forever.

There is no "reasonable doubt" that a person who could be eligible for a terminal medical release committed the crime. There is no doubt at all that a victim or victims will be notified that this person is being released from prison prior to the completion of sentence and there is no doubt this notification will retraumatize the victim or victims.

Carol Ellis, the retired director of the Victim Services Section Fairfax County, VA, Police Department and nationally-recognized expert in law enforcement-based victim services programs in discussing crime victims, in particular those who are known as "Homicide Survivors" (A homicide survivor is a person who lives on after a loved one has been murdered.) in the book *Obsession*, said:

"I've learned what real strength is and what real guts are all about, because these people go on. For others who would say, 'Get over it, stop belly aching, and quit whining' they haven't a clue, because these survivors get up every morning of their lives and they shower and they get

dressed and they go out, and, as the expression goes, they take on the world. But they take on the world with such a heavy heart and such a burden to their lives that most people who have not experienced it have no idea. You simply don't take a shower and wash it away. It doesn't go away."

In addition to my duties as the Legislative Affairs Liaison I also serve as the Crime Victim Liaison. I offer services to the victims of crime that are served by our sheriff's office. I am also a "Homicide Survivor." I understand to my core exactly what a crime victim feels.

Victims of crime expect certainty from our criminal justice system. Early release for any reason causes emotional turmoil. The current law is sufficient and demonstrates compassion. There is no need to change it. We are opposed to this bill and we would we ask the committee to oppose the bill as well.

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