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**Testimony to the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee  
In Support of HB2657  
February 15, 2022**

Chairman Owens and Committee Members:

Our associations support HB2657. This legislation is necessary to address the increasing rate of violent crime involving firearms. The rising violent crime rate is a nationwide problem and Kansas is not spared from those crime increases.

Too many of our violent crimes involve persons who are violating their prohibition of possessing a firearm due to prior convictions. Too often the penalty for the possession of the firearm by a prohibited person is just rolled into a concurrent sentence or the criminal history is such that the offender gets probation for the possession of firearms crime.

This bill directly addresses the problem of persons prohibited from possessing a firearm who continue to do so, often being arrested multiple times for those violations. These offenders create momentum for movements to restrict access to firearms by law abiding citizens. If passed this bill will create a strong and meaningful message to these dangerous criminals that Kansas will stand in support of their law-abiding citizens to reduce these crimes.

We often hear the concern about bed space and how the prison space needs to be prioritized for violent offenders. We would argue that convicted felons who commit new crimes while illegally possessing firearms should be among the highest priority for prison space.

We strongly encourage you to move HB2657 forward favorable for passage.

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