

Dear Lawmakers,

I am writing to you today to urge you to reject HB2059. Currently 18, 19, and 20-year-olds cannot legally carry hidden, loaded handguns in Kansas. I, for one, would like to keep it this way.

We protect our young people and our society by not allowing anyone under the age of 21 to purchase alcohol. Several jurisdictions in Kansas, including the city of Topeka, similarly restrict access to tobacco products until a person is 21 years old. Clearly as a society we have decided that it is not just okay, but necessary to put age restrictions on some rights and behaviors.

Many 18-year-olds are still in high school. Do any of us really feel comfortable allowing high school students to carry concealed, loaded, handguns in public? I definitely don't. In fact, the military doesn't even trust 18, 19, and 20-year-olds to carry guns on base.

We should protect these young people from making terrible life-ruining mistakes. Easier access to guns is the last thing that teens with limited rational decision-making power need. The presence of a loaded gun could easily turn a heated argument into a deadly encounter.

While doing research on-line, I found a disturbing statistic. Based on 2013-17 crime statistics, persons aged 18-20 made up only 4% of the US population, but 18% of all offenders in gun homicides.¹ These numbers should give us pause as we consider allowing young people to carry concealed handguns.

Carrying a loaded, hidden, handgun is a huge responsibility that I don't believe most teenagers are ready to take on.

I would urge you to reject this dangerous piece of legislation, which would seriously undermine public safety in Kansas communities.

Yours respectfully, Karin Barrett

1.) Everytown for Gun Safety analysis; Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), 2013-2017.

Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. While the FBI SHR does not include data from the state of Florida for the years 2013-2017, Everytown obtained data directly from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and included the reported homicides in the analysis. Rates calculated using age-specific US Census Population Data, 2013-2017.

Persons aged 18-20 made up 4 percent of the US population and represented 18 percent of all offenders in gun homicides.

Adults aged 21 and over made up 73 percent of the population and 74 percent of all offenders in gun homicides.

Analysis includes all offenders in single and multiple offender incidents.