

January 21, 2024

Dear Chairman Carpenter & Members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

As a long-time Kansas resident, voter, teacher, and parent, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HCR 5020. This unnecessary constitutional amendment would limit the right of the the Kansas Legislature to pass common-sense laws that save lives. It would also unnecessarily expose the State of Kansas, and taxpayer money, to lawsuits from convicted criminals.

In Kansas, we can continue to uphold and protect Second Amendment rights that are already in place at the state and federal level while focusing on reducing gun violence. Kansans suffer gun violence at rates above the national average, and guns are the leading cause of death among kids and teens in Kansas. In Kansas, an average of 52 children and teens die by guns every year. In an average year, 456 people die and 655 are wounded by guns in Kansas.

Strict scrutiny laws make state taxpayers fund the flow of lawsuits brought by criminal defendants. After strict scrutiny amendments passed in Louisiana and Missouri, convicted felons challenged state laws that prohibit felons from possessing firearms. The Missouri auditor projected that a strict scrutiny law would ultimately cost Missouri taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Gun deaths and injuries already cost Kansas \$5.7 billion each year, of which \$95.1 million is paid by taxpayers.

Thank you in advance for making the safety of Kansans a priority by voting NO on HCR 5020!

Claudia Olea  
Lawrence, Kansas