

Date: 2/6/2023

Bill number: Senate Bill 116

Proponent

Tammy Bartels  
Speaking for self

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 116.

As a certified firearms instructor, I know the value of safety education. I have taught classes to youth and their parents that teach them what to do if a friend brings a gun to school. We talk about who to go to and the dangers of handing a firearm without a trusted adult present. We review safety and teach both the parent and youth how a gun works. These classes help remove the mysticism of guns and have helped the students be better prepared and safer if they are presented with an unsecured firearm.

I am also a parent, and a grandparent. I advocated for public education for many years as a member of the Kansas Parent Teacher Association and believe that knowledge and education are the greatest gifts we can give young people. While my children are grown and my granddaughter is not quite school aged, my daughter is an administrator at an area high school. I am still a passionate advocate for public school education and believe that this bill will help make schools a safer place by educating our young people and removing that mysticism I mentioned earlier.

Some have expressed concerns about teaching children about guns, but their concerns are misplaced. We teach children to Stop, Drop, and Roll not because we expect them to grow up to be arsonist or to ever have to use it, but because it is an import skill to know should the need arise. We partner with local law enforcement to present the DARE program, not because we think all young people will become addicts or dealers, but because we want to give them tools they can use if they are ever put in a position that requires it. Offering educational curriculum on firearm safety is the same thing. It is giving youth a tool that they can use should they ever need it.

I have also read the Fiscal Note for SB 116. During my time as Kansas PTA President, I sat on a couple of different curriculum committees for the Department of Education. We never met more than twice in person and most of the work was conducted via electronic means. Since this bill calls for the new curriculum to be based of existing curriculum that is both tested and respected, I do not expect that the process will be as time consuming and expensive as some other committee's work. While there will certainly be a cost associated with the implementation, it will be far eclipsed by the value of teaching our students how to be safe and responsible around a gun should the need present itself.

Thank you for your time and consideration.