

**Testimony provided to
House Federal and State Affairs Committee of the Kansas Legislature
For Hearing February 6, 2025, HB2104 – Standardizing firearm safety programs in school districts.**

By: L. Stephen (Steve) Schmidt, 102 W Prairie Lakes Drive, Hesston, KS 67062, an individual testifying in his own behalf:

I want to let the Committee know that I am in full support of HB2104.

Regardless of one's political affiliation, or one's opinion on the right to possess firearms, children's safety must be paramount. The reality is that a child may encounter an unattended firearm sometime, somewhere. It is critical that children be taught how to properly react when they do encounter an unattended firearm, for their own safety and the safety of others.

The proposed HB2104 has many common-sense provisions to teach children just that. Notable provisions I support are:

- School districts *may* provide firearm safety education programs; districts are not mandated to provide such programs if a district does not wish to do so.
- But, if a school district does decide to offer firearm safety education programs, all the programs must conform to state board of education guidelines; that is a common-sense requirement so that all children receive the same information.
- The eddie eagle gunsafe program for younger children is intelligent, simple, effective, and memorable --- stop, don't touch, run away, tell an adult. I've watched the eddie eagle video; it is excellent.
- The KDWP hunter education in our schools program is appropriate for older youth.
- Making either of those two programs optional for grades 6 through 8 gives school districts the ability to choose the educational program they believe is best suited to their students' abilities.

There are, however, possible reasons to not support HB2104.

- The eddie eagle gunsafe program cannot possibly be good because it was created and is offered by the National Rifle Association (NRA). There are those who believe the NRA is the absolute personification of evil, and nothing good or worthwhile could possibly come out of the NRA. Support of HB2104 would only serve to validate or support the NRA. *[This despite the fact that the NRA is arguably the premier advocate for and teacher of firearm safety in the world, training private*

citizens, training law enforcement, and training those who become the trainers on the safe and proper use of firearms.]

- An important part of the anti-Second Amendment, anti-firearm agenda is to convince people that a firearm is inherently sinister and is totally unsafe by definition; firearms are to be totally feared and eliminated. If children are taught that a firearm can be encountered safely if respected and encountered in the proper manner, it is much more difficult to advance the “anti-agenda” using fearmongering; thus, firearm safety education such as the eddie eagle gunsafe program should not be taught. *[This despite the fact that our children are taught at an early age how to respect and safely encounter common and potentially life threatening objects on a daily basis such as: don’t stick objects into electrical outlets, and tell an adult if the electrical cord is damaged; don’t cross the street by yourself, get an adult to help; use a kitchen knife only when an adult is supervising; don’t go near the pool if an adult is not there also; stay away from a car that is left running unattended and tell an adult; and so forth. Stop, don’t touch, run away, tell an adult is pretty good advice for a lot of things in life.]*
- Firearm safety education might “rub-off” onto the children’s parents, making the parents realize firearms are not inherently evil after all, thus making parents less receptive to advocacy against firearms and the Second Amendment. *[I’ve often heard educators say that the best way to reach the parents is through their children. Just maybe, a child might take home the lessons learned about firearm safety and save a parent’s or other family member’s life.]*

I categorically reject such arguments against HB2104, and **I throw my full support behind HB2104.**

Thank you for considering my viewpoints.