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House Judiciary Committee  
Chair Susan Humphries  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Ave Ste  
Topeka, KS 66612-1504

March 6, 2025

Distinguished Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of victims of violence in Johnson County, Kansas, I urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 204. Sealing criminal records is essential to the protection of victims of domestic violence.

In October 2024, "Kay" entered Safehome's shelter after her husband physically assaulted her in front of their children, locked them out of the refrigerator, prevented "Kay" from seeking mental health help, and forced her to quit her job. After arriving in our shelter, she felt safe and began working with our attorney on a protection order and divorce. With encouragement from her therapist and assistance from her case manager, she found renewed self-confidence and landed a job. "Kay" was then able to secure an apartment for herself and her two children, something she never thought possible. In January of this year, she reached out to her case manager in tears because her new physical address was exposed in an online subpoena for a criminal case with her ex-husband. There is a protection order in place; however, the client is terrified that her home address has now been exposed and she is considering moving again. "Kay" worked so hard to obtain her new residence and is now facing an uncertain future as she considers her options because her address was revealed in a subpoena made public.

The sad truth is that domestic violence isn't going away and the severity of cases is escalating. Last year, we helped 19% more people with Protection Orders. We worked with three clients whose abusive partners are charged with attempted murder, including one who stabbed the survivor SEVEN times. More than 80% of the clients we screened using the evidence-based Lethality Assessment Protocol screened as being in highly lethal situations. Of all respondents, 55% reported their abusive partner threatened to kill them or their children, 55% reported being strangled, 70% reported the physical violence has increased in severity or frequency, and 54% reported being forced into sexual activity.

Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 204 to ensure the fear "Kay" is feeling never happens to another survivor again.

Sincerely,

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