

Dear Kansas State Senators,

I appreciate your time in reading this letter today. I am writing to give my personal testimony in support of Senate Bill SB288.

A few years ago, several families in our community were made aware a man on the registered offender list had moved into a home located very near our elementary and middle school (connected). It was at this time many of us discovered there were zero laws in place preventing this from happening. While this was disheartening, everyone cautiously moved forward with this information in hand, knowing it was important to keep our children away from the home where he lived. We were also told by the principal that this man would not be allowed on school grounds.

Fast forward to the retirement of our principal and a new one being hired. Just a little over a month ago, I was in complete shock to see this man at my daughter's elementary school dance. I have three daughters, with this being my youngest who is in 5th grade, so this was our last dance with parents involved. When the principal was confronted about his presence, she stated (while completely annoyed she was being questioned), that he had "special permission" from HER to be there that night.

This is not an offender with a minor crime. This is a man who spent over seven years in federal prison for the possession and distribution of child pornography of children ages 18 months to 14 years of age.

I was absolutely disgusted when I ran in to a dark gym to find my daughter and leave (due to his presence) and personally saw and photographed this man taking pictures and videos of the dance floor, where my daughter and her friends were located. I will never know what footage could potentially be on his phone.

While I believe our school district and this principal failed the hundreds of kids who attend Blue River Elementary, I firmly believe the best way to keep ALL children safe and take this decision making away from one building administrator, is to implement stricter laws in the state of Kansas.

I want to share a painful part of my personal story of why this has been so devastating and triggering for me. I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. The trauma I have had to endure trying to cope with what happened to me has been debilitating at times. I'm thankful I have the resources to seek professional help. However; my brother took a different road to cope with the trauma of child sexual abuse. In May of this last year, my brother died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl. His life became nothing of what his potential could have been because he was not protected from abusers.

School should be a complete safe space for children! I'm disgusted this man has overstepped boundaries by entering our school (he doesn't even have biological children!). Through the research a group of us has done, it appears Kansas has the weakest laws around convicted sex offenders. Please be part of righting this wrong and avoiding something terribly bad happening to our children in this great state. I appreciate your consideration in making these changes.

Regards,

Danielle George