

3 February, 2015

Dear Senator,

I am writing to ask you to oppose SB 97, a bill amending K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 32-1301, 32-1306 and 32-1308 that would allow members of the public to come into contact with dangerous, big cats.

This issue is very personal to us. On August 18, 2005, our lives changed forever. On that day, a Siberian tiger killed our daughter, Haley Hilderbrand. You cannot possibly imagine the pain of losing a child until you have experienced it. It is a pain that never goes away. You just learn to live with it.

Haley was posing for her senior high school picture next to the tiger at a USDA licensed wildlife facility in Mound Valley, Kansas when the animal attacked and killed her despite being on a leash held by the handler. At 17 years old, it never occurred to her, since she was at a licensed facility, and being assisted by an apparently trained handler, that she was in any danger.

Not long after Haley was killed, Kansas passed the existing law that bans ownership of big cats and, although it has an exemption for USDA licensed facilities, it prohibits any contact between big cats and members of the public. We worked tirelessly- and testified repeatedly- to get this bill passed. This bill was supported by many Kansas residents also concerned about the issue.

The public contact provision is pivotal to the success of this bill protecting the public. Without it in place, the line between safety and common sense is blurred and accidents will happen. Since 1990, 281 people have been mauled by captive, big cats in the US alone.

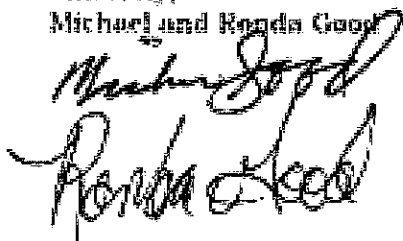
The legislation I am writing to you about, SB 97, would reverse all the work we have done to protect other mothers, fathers and children in Kansas from this kind of senseless tragedy.

We hope that you share our deep concern about this issue and agree to oppose SB 97 and keep the existing law intact with a ban on contact between big cats of any size and members of the public.

Thank you very much for you time and for considering our very personal request.

Sincerely,

Michael and Ronda Goor

Handwritten signatures of Michael and Ronda Goor. The signature for Michael is written above the signature for Ronda.