

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 6
To the
Committee on Federal and State Affairs

My name is Glenda Overstreet Vaughn and I am present today to represent support of Senate Bill 6 "Standardized law enforcement procedure to assess possession of firearms by an individual during routine stops" proposed by Senator Faust-Goudeau.

I am a proud member of two organizations that advocate for and are concerned with African American issues, women issues and work toward the betterment of the community as a whole that we live in and serve - The NAACP and the Links Incorporated.

I believe it is appropriate to say that both organizations stand for working to ensure fairness and justice for all and work diligently to ensure further that African Americans and other people of color are included in the circle of fairness and justice. This is what I am a member and this is also why I am here today.

To ensure all citizens of Kansas receive fairness and justice, particularly African Americans and people of color, it is important to have transparency. Transparency comes when citizens are informed of and can have access to policies and procedures that may ultimately affect them or their loved ones.

The need for transparency becomes vital when affecting African Americans as there is a greater propensity for them to be subject to being detained by law enforcement than any other ethnic group of citizens. In fact USA Today reports that the racial gap in US arrest rates show a "staggering disparity".

The two year old USA Today analysis report on arrest records indicated "at least 1,581 other police departments across the USA arrest black people at rates even more skewed than in Ferguson."

While there are diverse reasons that can be present. The report notes that "whatever the reasons, the results are the same: Blacks are far more likely to be arrested than any other racial group in the USA. In some places, dramatically so."

As a Kansas native, it has been my observation that Kansas law enforcement generally show unfavorable presence when interacting with our African American community, especially with our males. Therefore, it becomes critical to have Kansas law enforcement to provide detail written policy and procedures that will be adhered to by law enforcement when inquiring about the possession of a firearm during the detaining of anyone during a lawful enforcement action.

Providing such written policy and procedure is a basic step in providing transparency. However, it is further submitted that such policy and procedure be reviewed for revision and update by

citizens or organizations of citizens representing people of color to ensure that such policies and procedures are fair and represent situations to ensure safety of citizens and law enforcement..

Law enforcement policies should be reflective of the voice of the community it serves. To ensure this, diverse members of the community should be actively engaged in the development and implementation of law enforcement policies and procedures.

Thank you for allowing my written testimony to address this bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenda Overstreet Vaughn