

House Federal and State Affairs Committee:

Please vote no on House Bill 2326.

This is my story of my family from just 12 days ago, March 1, 2019, when my world was changed forever. Around 1:30pm, the first graders at Highlands Elementary School in Mission KS were out at recess. The teachers heard gunfire. When they came in they discovered that the bullet came through the 3rd graders' class window. The school was put on lockdown. I received an email at 2:20pm about the lockdown situation. I was still at work, my daughter (a sixth grader) was to spend a fun afternoon with Grandma. I phoned my mom to let her know what was going on and what to expect when she arrived at school. Once the police thought the situation was under control, the school made the decision to dismiss children individually. Just as this was happening a man that lives directly across the street from the school came out onto his front porch with a gun in his hand shooting at the police in the direction of the children being released with their teachers.

At this exact moment of the live gunfire exchange starting, my 72-year-old mother and my little girl had turned on the turn signal to drive onto the street, directly in front of the shooter's house. She was within several feet of the gunfire exchange between the shooter and police. Thank God she saw this moment and quickly continued forward in her car.

At this time, I was on the phone with my husband as he was walking towards the school, we live a short block and a half away. While talking to him, he turned onto that same street and saw a man with a gun; the man began shooting at the officers. He told me he had to go because there was live gunfire. He had to quickly hide behind a car only a few hundred feet away.

When I got home that night I saw my daughter's open lunchbox with the note I had secretly put in that morning "Espie, Good luck on your book report! I love you, Mom" This is our neighborhood where we live, walk and play. Was anyone killed – No Thank God- but why does a situation like this ever have to occur? Why do we now have to explain and prepare the 300 children between the ages of 5-12 years old for the reality of these events?

Thank you,
Mary Lemon, 4318 W, 62nd Terrace, Fairway, KS 66205