



March 21, 2019
Senate Committee on Transportation
Testimony in support of HB 2225
Aaron Mays, Executive Director
Kansas Operation Lifesaver

Thank you, Chairman Petersen, and members of the Transportation Committee for allowing me to testify in favor of HB 2225. My name is Aaron Mays and I'm the Executive Director of Kansas Operation Lifesaver. We are a statewide rail safety advocacy organization with a mission to end collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and on railroad property through a nationwide network of volunteers who work to educate people about rail safety. In 2018, there were 34 railroad crossing collisions in Kansas. In those collisions, there were 14 people injured and 5 fatalities. In 32% (11) of those collisions, the driver did not stop at all, and 26% (9) of the incidents resulted from drivers going around crossing gates. To help prevent tragedies like these, Operation Lifesaver works with law enforcement and railroads to raise awareness through positive enforcement initiatives.

HB 2225 seeks to add another layer of safety for both rail workers and drivers. In many cases, on-track railroad equipment is large and can be fast moving. Like a train, on-track railroad equipment cannot swerve to avoid collisions and may not be able to stop quickly. Because of these factors, the same traffic safety rules should apply whether tracks are occupied by trains or by maintenance equipment. Passage of this bill would help add consistency to our laws and remove any confusion about when drivers are required to stop at crossings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aaron Mays