

Testimony in Favor of HB 2133

January 24, 2022

Stacy Hanson

Pratt, Kansas

Distinguished Members of the Committee, Staff and Everyone Present:

I am honored by the opportunity, given to me by Representative Brett Fairchild, to testify on behalf of HB 2133. Rep. Fairchild and I are examples of good people from different parties who can find plenty of common ground. I am grateful of his support of my work in substance use and mental illness in Barber, Comanche, Edwards, Harper, Kiowa, Pratt, and Stafford counties. And we both agree there is good Mexican food in St. John. Thank you, Rep. Fairchild, for this opportunity to express my opinion.

While I understand and appreciate the advantage of surprise to law enforcement in carrying out no-knock warrants, I do not agree with the legality of such warrants because of my concern for the safety of everyone involved, especially innocent bystanders.

In an increasingly armed society, I believe the element of surprise carries increased risk to law enforcement officers. People, both law-abiding and otherwise, who chose to arm themselves are likely to have a weapon very close at hand, even at home. Perhaps especially at home. Law enforcement professionals already risk their lives every time they show up for work and I hate the idea of making their jobs more dangerous.

However, law enforcement professionals are well-aware of what they are getting into with their career choices and the dangers of carrying out no-knock warrants, so my primary concern for safety is for the innocent people who happen to be in proximity of such activity. In the course of my work, I must often tackle difficult problems from a variety of perspectives before the best solution is found. Surely the same can happen in law enforcement.

I have not made a study of the frequency of news reports about no-knock warrants gone horribly, tragically awry, but it feels as though there is news on almost a weekly basis about an innocent person caught in the middle of a no-knock warrant being carried out somewhere in the nation.

Please, let's spare Kansas from being one of the places where such an avoidable tragedy takes place. Our state deserves a reputation as a safe, caring place to live, with law enforcement who serve the public safety without causing unnecessary harm to innocents.

Please, let's spare our Kansas cities and towns from the expense of wrongful injury and death lawsuits.

Please, let's spare the fine, caring law enforcement professionals I know from carrying lifelong guilt from being involved in unintentionally injuring, or even killing, an innocent person.

Please, let's protect innocent people from any more danger than they already face by living near, or perhaps with, a criminal suspect. Find another way to catch the criminals.