

Members of the Committee-

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Crystal D. Hays. I am a lifelong resident of Kansas City Kansas, and a Survivor Lead, Mentor, and Survivor Fellow with Moms Demand Action and Everytown for Gun Safety. I am submitting written testimony in opposition to HB2058.

HB2058; which would automatically allow individuals with permits from other states to carry hidden and loaded firearms in Kansas, on the streets of our communities. A community that continues to battle repeated incidents of gun violence. Being a survivor of gun violence, repeatedly, you lose the sense of safety and security, even in your own home. The fear of the unknown is heightened to a fever pitch level. Even doing something as necessary as going to the grocery store to shop for a family meal, induces re-traumatization. Not knowing if you will be the next victim or witness to gun violence. Not knowing if the person in front of you should be considered a threat to your already lacking sense of security; a person you may not already personally know. You don't know if or what incidents of trauma they are experiencing. You don't know if this individual is struggling with some form of mental illness, that may induce an unexpected impulsive reaction of violence. You don't know if that individual has already exhibited violent tendencies or has previously been involved in an incident in which a handgun was used. You don't know in fact that this individual has a permit to carry; had training in using firearms or some form of safety protocol. And they might not be a local, and might not meet Kansas's standard for a concealed carry permit, yet if this law passes they might legally be carrying a hidden, loaded gun.

As community leaders, community activists, advocates, and lawmakers, we should not contribute to the dangers to the community by allowing for more people to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public. We, as leaders, need to prioritize keeping our communities safe, and not pass laws that increase the risk of gun violence.

Crystal Hays