

Testimony to Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Date of Testimony: March 2, 2022

Bill Number: SB192

Disposition: Proponent

Written-Only Testimony

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Interest Represented: Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Dear Chair Olson and Committee Members,

My name is Colleen Cunningham, and I am writing today as a Kansas citizen and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America volunteer in support of SB192.

First, I'd like to thank you for providing a hearing for this legislation. Domestic violence is, unfortunately, a growing problem both nationally and here in Kansas, and I appreciate your willingness to discuss a difficult issue, and to consider steps which would stem this violence toward our family members and neighbors here in Kansas.

According to data from the National Domestic Violence Hotline, nearly 1,200 Kansans contacted the hotline in 2019, steadily increasing from 912 calls in 2015. The majority of those calls were from: Wichita, Kansas City, and Topeka, but calls came from across the state, including our Johnson County suburbs as well as our rural areas. In fact, simply living in a rural location was cited as a factor for domestic violence by 3% of Kansas callers in 2019. Let's be clear: this is a problem that affects all Kansans.

Firearms were cited as a factor in 14% of these calls. This is in line with other domestic violence data. We know that nationally, every month an average of 70 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. We know that 4.5 million women have reported being threatened with a gun by an intimate partner. And we know that, when there is access to a firearm, women are 5 times as likely to die at the hands of a domestic abuser. In Kansas, as is the case nationally, Native American, Black, and Latina women and families are disproportionately affected, and killed by, domestic violence homicide.

Kansas legislators have acknowledged these issues, and have previously supported legislation to address domestic violence. In 2018 the Kansas Legislature passed HB2145, which prohibits gun possession by convicted domestic abusers, and did so with nearly unanimous bipartisan support. This bill was signed into law by then-Governor Jeff Colyer.

I am asking Committee members to provide similar bipartisan support to SB192, which would require relinquishment of firearms from convicted domestic abusers. This legislation will quite literally save the lives of our Kansas family members and neighbors.

Thank you for your time.

Colleen Cunningham

Overland Park, Kansas