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SB 522, Proponent

WRITTEN-ONLY Testimony

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National Shooting Sports Foundation

Dear Federal & State Affairs Committee Members:

On behalf of the American firearm industry, I request that you support SB 522, legislation that promises to provide essential safety education to young Kansans. The country and the state have never been more divided politically, but if any legislation should receive unanimous support of all legislators and a signature by the Governor, this is it.

It is no accident that the state and the country as a whole are experiencing record low *numbers* of accidental firearm-related deaths at a time when the *numbers* of firearm owners and civilian-owned firearms have never been greater. I am referring to pure numbers, not rates. This point simply cannot be stressed enough. The modern record of firearm safety is truly extraordinary.

Organizations like ours, the National Rifle Association, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks have expended untold resources to teach children and adults how to be exceptionally safe with their firearms. History and experience show that education must be encouraged, not suppressed. HB 522 encourages it. Sadly, we have entered a time when this must be explicitly stated. The anti-firearm zealots have weaponized firearm safety education and it is tragic.

The most radical opponents of firearm rights in the country persistently claim more guns owned by citizens will always mean more violent crime and more accidental deaths. Both are demonstrably false using hard statistics collected and reported by the U.S. government. This assertion is not based on a snapshot in time, a favorite tactic these radicals use in their "research," but data collected by agencies like the FBI and CDC over decades.

Americans are safer with their firearms than any other common, potentially dangerous possessions in the home. Gun owners deserve immense praise, not scorn. However, safety education efforts must continue and grow. They cannot be suppressed and discouraged due to the political agendas of the most radical elements in our society.

No matter how much some might want to simply wish guns away, it is not going to happen. Americans are buying firearms at unprecedented rates. This is the reality. Let us do as much as possible to provide firearm safety education, especially to our young. Please support SB 522 in committee and on the floor.

Thank you.

Darren LaSorte