

**Testimony of Colleen Cunningham**  
**January 23, 2023, 9:00AM**

Good morning, Chairman Carpenter, Committee members and staff. Thank you for reading my testimony today.

My name is Colleen Cunningham. I am a Kansas voter and a parent of 3 young kids. I am fortunate to have not been personally impacted by gun violence, but incidents of gun violence in my community and state are on my radar, and I know many people who have been threatened, killed or who have lost loved ones to gun violence. Gun violence is prevalent enough in our community that my kids have all regularly practiced lockdown drills at school since kindergarten and are aware of this potential threat in a place that should be safe. Gun violence prevention is a topic that matters very much to me and my family.

I am testifying today because HCR 5020 is a dangerous resolution which poses a direct threat to the Kansas public safety laws that protect our communities, which keep guns out of the hands of people who we all agree shouldn't have them.

Thinking about this proposed legislation today, I am especially tuned in to the newly-released report from the US Department of Justice regarding the "unimaginable failure" in Uvalde, Texas, which led to the deaths of 19 children and 2 teachers. In that case, an 18 year old high school student who had a number of "red flags" (including having been nicknamed "School Shooter") was able to purchase "2 semiautomatic weapons, conversion devices used to increase the rate of fire, and thousands of rounds of ammunition." Despite 400 officers responding to this active shooting, including 5 SROs, 25 local officers, 16 sheriff's deputies, 149 Border Patrol officers, 91 state police officers and 13 US Marshalls, they were unable to stop a heavily-armed teenager.

I am also reminded of Officer Mike Mosher, here in Overland Park, who was killed in the line of duty just a few blocks from my home by a man with a lengthy criminal history, which included prior assaults against law enforcement officers, as well as domestic assault. We know that a history of domestic violence increases the likelihood that someone will commit gun violence, and the Kansas legislature has passed laws based on this knowledge. HCR 5020 would put these laws, and thus our community safety and particularly the safety of our law enforcement officers, into further jeopardy.

Kansans suffer from gun violence at rates above the national average, and firearms are the leading cause of death for kids and teenagers in Kansas. The majority of Kansans—including gun owners—want laws that would keep guns out of the hands of individuals that we know are dangerous, including felons and domestic abusers. The Kansas legislature has passed laws to this end. This amendment could allow those previously passed laws to be peeled back, a threat to the safety of all Kansans. This is not a hypothetical: when similar amendments passed in Louisiana and Missouri, convicted felons and domestic abusers sued for access to firearms.

For these reasons, I encourage members of the committee to vote **NO** on **House Resolution 5020**.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.