

Testimony of Melissa Reichmeier
Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
January 23, 2023, 9:00AM

Good afternoon, Chairman Carpenter, Committee members, and staff. Thank you for acknowledging my testimony today.

My name is Melissa Reichmeier.

I have been a resident of Overland Park, KS for 35 years. My husband and I chose to live here to raise our three children, two of whom still live in the area.

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

My husband and I are semi-retired educators. Over the course of a few years, my high school alone experienced one student suicide, one parent suicide and one parent death because of a domestic violence dispute. I experienced firsthand how gun deaths affect an entire community, even with firearms that are purchased legally but end up in the hands of a family member who should not have access to them.

Suicides have skyrocketed in Kansas to where 68% of gun deaths are suicides compared to 57% nationwide.

This bill poses several significant concerns:

If adopted, strict scrutiny would threaten to eliminate Kansas's most crucial public safety laws, including:

- **Prohibition on Gun Possession by Convicted Felons:** After strict scrutiny amendments passed in Louisiana and Missouri, convicted felons challenged state laws that prohibit felons from possessing firearms. At least one lower court found that Louisiana's law prohibiting felons from having guns was unconstitutional. Fortunately, the Louisiana Supreme Court reversed this ruling.
- **Prohibitions on Gun Possession by Domestic Abusers:** In Louisiana, after strict scrutiny passed, a convicted domestic abuser challenged the constitutionality of a state law prohibiting possession of a firearm by people convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes.

Strict scrutiny laws make state taxpayers fund the flow of lawsuits brought by criminal defendants.

- The Missouri State Auditor determined that Louisiana’s strict scrutiny law led to “significant time, effort, and expenditures by Louisiana’s public defenders and district attorney’s offices,” imposing “significant workload and related costs on the Louisiana government.” The auditor projected that a strict scrutiny law in Missouri **would ultimately cost Missouri taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.**

I encourage members of the committee to vote **NO** on House **Resolution 5020**.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.