



PO Box 654

Lawrence, KS 66044

KansasInterfaithAction.org

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director

Rev. Dr. Annie Ricker, Board Chair

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2803 – Gun Rights Preservation Act

House Fed & State Affairs Committee, Rep. Will Carpenter, chair

March 7, 2024

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testify. My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber, and I am executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social and economic justice issue. KIFA is opposed to HB 2803.

One of KIFA’s key mission areas is that of gun violence. The people and communities of faith that make up KIFA support legislation that would address the epidemic of gun violence besetting our country. The pastors I work with hold this issue very closely, because they are the ones who have to sit with families after a suicide, after an accident, or after a shooting in a school, bar or parking lot.

Every denomination KIFA works with closely has made public statements in support of what we call “gunsense” legislation. I could share a dozen such statements, but I will only share one, from the Presbyterian Church USA:

It is clear that our voices have not been persuasive in themselves and our actions too limited to stem the tide of gun violence. There are too many places in America where it is difficult to hear [God’s word] over the persistent retort of gunfire. We continue to be convinced that God calls us to protect the lives of all within the human community, as each is loved by our Creator. In order to be faithful to our vocation to seek God’s shalom, we need to seek new and active ways of effectively bringing life-saving change. We can no longer tolerate such a preventable exile from God’s peaceable kingdom or reign.

We are beginning to see the results of Kansas’ over-10-year experiment in doing away with all laws regulating handguns, and they are as we have predicted - more guns lead to more gun violence, more guns used in domestic abuse, and more suicides.

The Kansas legislature long ago abdicated its responsibility to keep our citizens safer when it removed virtually all gun laws from the books. Those of us concerned about this issue have had to look to the federal government, which has passed some important laws and regulations but could do more. This bill would nullify federal gun laws by preventing Kansas state and local law enforcement from assisting in the enforcement of these laws, and penalizing police, prosecutors, and other Kansas government

employees who participate in the enforcement of federal public safety laws. This is exactly the opposite of the approach we should be taking.

We should be treating gun violence as the public health crisis it is. In the aftermath of the tragic shooting at the Chiefs' Super Bowl parade, what we need are the enactment of safe storage, red flag, and universal background checks laws, not this kind of state level posturing and likely unconstitutional efforts to interfere with federal attempts to protect Kansans from the irresponsibility of our own state legislature.

We urge you to vote no on HB 2803.

Thank you for your attention.