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House of Representatives

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Blake Carpenter  
House Speaker Pro Tempore  
Representative, 81st District

House Federal and State Affairs Committee,

1/23/24

Honorable members of this esteemed committee, my fellow stewards of liberty and custodians of our revered Constitution. Today, as I stand before you, I do so not only in my capacity as a State Representative and the author of House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 5020, but also as a fervent advocate for the inalienable rights that are the bedrock of our great nation. In the insightful words of Thomas Jefferson, "No freeman shall ever be debarred the use of arms." This profound declaration resonates with the enduring truth that the right to bear arms is an essential component of our freedom.

Our forefathers, in their unparalleled wisdom, recognized the right to bear arms as a fundamental liberty, integral to the American ethos. This right was not a mere addendum to our Constitution, but a crucial element in the architecture of our liberties – a bulwark against oppression, and a guardian of personal autonomy and security. As we deliberate on HCR 5020, let us recall that our task transcends mere policy-making; we are upholding a legacy, a sacred trust passed down from those who forged this nation on principles of freedom and self-determination.

The Founders, in their foresight, enshrined the right to bear arms within the fabric of our Constitution. This right was not an afterthought, but a pillar of our liberty, a safeguard against tyranny, and a cornerstone of our security as a free state. As we deliberate on the merits of HCR 5020, let us remember that we are not merely discussing a policy decision; we are reaffirming a legacy, a legacy that has been entrusted to us by generations of patriots who believed in the sanctity of individual freedom and the right to self-defense.

Our nation's history is steeped in the steadfast belief in the right to bear arms. This right, enshrined in our Second Amendment, was not born out of whim, but from the hard-learned lessons of history. Our founding fathers, having endured the yoke of tyranny, understood the critical need for a populace that could defend itself, not only from external threats but from the overreach of its own government. They recognized that this right was integral to the balance of power, a necessary means to ensure that our government remains of the people, by the people, for the people.

In our current age, it's easy to forget these hard-earned lessons. We live in a time far removed from the struggles that birthed our nation. Yet, the principles that guided our forebears remain just as relevant. The right to bear arms is not merely about the tools of defense; it is about maintaining the very essence of freedom and individual autonomy. It is about ensuring that every citizen has the means to protect their life, their family, and their liberty.

In recent years, we've witnessed growing challenges to our constitutional rights. In Kansas, like many parts of our nation, law-abiding gun owners face increasing scrutiny and regulatory burdens that

threaten to erode their freedoms. These challenges come in many forms – from well-intentioned but misguided legislative proposals to misinformed public discourse that often vilifies gun ownership.

HCR 5020 is our stand against this tide. It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to the Constitution and to the rights of our citizens. This resolution is not about politics; it's about protection – protection of our heritage, our rights, and our future. It seeks to fortify the safeguards around our Second Amendment rights, ensuring that no law or regulation diminishes the freedom that this amendment guarantees to every Kansan.

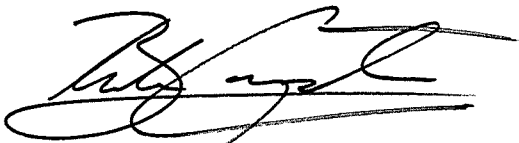
As we delve deeper into the essence of HCR 5020, it is imperative to understand its specific provisions and the pivotal impact they will have in safeguarding our constitutional rights. This resolution marks a significant advancement in our legislative efforts to protect the rights of gun owners in Kansas.

Firstly, HCR 5020 explicitly protects ammunition, firearm accessories, and components under the constitutional protections. This expansion is crucial in today's context, where the right to bear arms can be indirectly undermined through restrictions on essential aspects of gun ownership. By encompassing these elements, we ensure that the right to bear arms remains practical and meaningful.

Moreover, this resolution elevates the right to bear arms to its rightful status as a natural and fundamental right. This is not merely a legal distinction; it is a profound recognition of the intrinsic nature of this right, akin to our rights to freedom of speech and due process. It acknowledges that the right to bear arms is inherent to our very existence as free individuals and is indispensable in safeguarding our liberties.

Additionally, HCR 5020 establishes that any infringement upon this right is subject to strict scrutiny. This is the highest standard of judicial review, reserved for the most fundamental rights. Under this standard, any law or regulation that infringes upon the right to bear arms must serve a compelling governmental interest and must be narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. This provision ensures that any attempt to dilute our Second Amendment rights will face the utmost judicial rigor, thereby fortifying our defenses against any encroachments.

By adopting these provisions, HCR 5020 sets a robust foundation for the protection of gun rights in Kansas. It sends a clear message that we are committed to defending not just the letter of our Constitution but the spirit of freedom and autonomy it embodies.



**Blake Carpenter**

Speaker Pro Tempore

Kansas State Representative, District 81