



February 15, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Wichita has experienced increasing violent gun crime, reflecting the national trend among larger U.S. cities. One of the main problems we encounter is offenders repeatedly arrested for firearms-related offenses and not suitably being held accountable for their criminal behavior. We have undeterred people arrested multiple times for felon in possession of a firearm without fear of reprisal from the law. The passing of bill HB2657 could significantly aid in the fight against the increases in violent gun crime while holding those who openly ignore prohibited firearm laws truly accountable and perhaps even deter them from engaging in firearm-related activity.

A recent example of this undeterred criminal activity occurred in Wichita on 1/11/22 under case 22C001920, with a suspect being arrested for felon in possession of a firearm and illegal drugs. The suspect was released from jail within 8 hours, pending the drug testing results. On 1/30/22, the same individual was listed as a suspect on a drive-by under case 22C005882 and then again on 2/7/22 for a second drive-by under case 22C007499. Seven days later, on 2/14/22, we arrested our suspect for the drive-by crimes, and he was again in possession of another firearm. Interestingly, shell casings from one of the related drive-by offenses have also been found on the scene of a recent homicide, drawing a potential nexus between the suspect and the homicide case.

This undeterred behavior is not isolated. In 2001 we had 68 arrests for felony possession of a firearm. In 2020 we had 361, our highest number on record. In the past two years, we have arrested 84 people for repeated violations of felon in possession of a firearm. Six individuals have been arrested four times for the same offense in the past two years.

The passing of this bill could greatly help law enforcement agencies across the state by introducing mandatory sentences to some of our most violent and prolific offenders and deterring others, which could ultimately help reduce the violent gun crime in the state of Kansas.

Sincerely,

Paul Duff
WPD Interim Deputy Chief

Gordon Ramsay
WPD Chief of Police