



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF **HB 2095**

February 2, 2021

Chairman Patton and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 400 of the practicing pediatricians in the state. The KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas have the opportunity to grow safe and strong. It is with this goal in mind that we want to share our testimony in favor of the proposed **HB 2095** that would allow for a firearm to be removed from individuals deemed at risk of harming themselves or others.

This bill can play a valuable role in preventing deaths and injuries due to firearms. The most effective measure to prevent suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm-related injuries to children and adolescents is the absence of guns from homes. Kansas is facing a youth suicide crisis, as suicide continues to be the second leading cause of death for Kansans in the 15 to 24-year age group. Additionally, the number of suicides by Kansans 18 years old and younger more than doubled in the decade between 2005 and 2015.

Access to a firearm increases the lethality of a suicide attempt and is estimated to triple the risk of death by suicide. We can save lives by removing firearms from the homes of individuals identified as being at risk of suicide. A 2016 study found that Connecticut's ERPO law is estimated to have averted 1 suicide for every 10 to 20 guns seized, preventing 72 suicides from 1999-2013. Indiana's red flag law is associated with a 7.5% decrease in suicides from 2005-2015. From 2009-2016 in the U.S., there were 156 mass shootings (4 or more people were killed, not including the shooters). In 42% of these mass shootings, the shooter conveyed warning signs in advance of the fatal shooting, demonstrating danger to themselves or others.

While we respect the second amendment rights of the families under our care, pediatricians are particularly concerned about firearms remaining in homes where danger of harm has been identified due to mental health concerns. Studies have shown that many suicide survivors contemplated their actions in a very brief window of time, and that states with waiting period laws have fewer firearm suicides than those without. Simply put, someone with unrestricted firearm access may make a snap decision that results in devastating consequences.

Thank you for your time and consideration in passing **HB 2095** that allow firearms to be removed from homes of individuals deemed at risk of harming themselves or others.

Respectfully submitted,

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