

Monday, March 14 2022

SB 522 Standardizing firearm safety education programs in school districts.

Proponent

Oral in-person testimony

Rebecca Schmoe (785) 214-1666 rebeccaschmoe@yahoo.com

DC Project and 1 Million Moms Against Gun Control

These days, as a nation, we are struggling to find common ground. Our children's safety is the common ground we have been searching for. Every single one of us in this room, and everyone watching from home, agrees that teaching our children how to be safe is paramount.

My name is Rebecca Schmoe. I am a grassroots gun rights advocate. I am the Kansas State Director for DC Project, an organization of women for gun rights who believe in education not legislation, as well as a SpokesMom for 1 Million Moms Against Gun Control, which was founded in 2012 in order to give mothers who understand that we have an inherent right and immense responsibility to protect ourselves and our families with the most efficient and effective tools available today a voice in our local communities and across our nation.

I'm confident that you recognize that we are already teaching our children about Stranger Danger, what to do if you get lost, Fire, Tornado, and Intruder Drills, Stop Drop and Roll, DARE to say no to drugs, Sex ED, Body Safety, and Drivers ED. Why would anyone purposely leave out teaching children how to keep themselves safe around firearms? Even if you personally do not keep guns in your home, you and I want our children to know the basic formula of Stop, Don't Touch, Run Away, Tell a Grownup.

We also understand that it is not simply about teaching your children to get to a safe place if they see an unsecured gun, but it is also about

teaching your child to recognize if someone around them is being unsafe with a gun.

When you give your child consistent information of what safe gun handling looks like then they will also know what it looks like when someone is being unsafe with a gun. Those crucial moments could give them an opportunity to quickly remove themselves from an unsafe environment.

Everyone here understands that even if you do not personally own a gun our children will eventually be in the presence of someone who does. It is our responsibility as the adults to make sure we equip our children with the basic uniform and accurate education this bill provides for school districts across our state. That way, all Kansas school aged children will have the same opportunity, continuity, and standard of accident prevention education throughout their school career, even if they change districts within the state. With the passage of this bill we are equipping the future generations of Kansas with the skills and tools necessary to combat negligent firearm discharges; some which bring horrific and deadly consequences.

Some reports say that in 2022 there have already been 43 unintentional shootings by children, resulting in 16 deaths and 29 injuries nationally; one of these was reported to be in our very own Wichita, KS.

This is unacceptable. Negligent discharge from a firearm can be prevented with proper safety training. We must do everything possible to get accident prevention education to be easily accessible in our schools.

Who wouldn't want our children to know how to get to safety and tell us that they have encountered an unsecured firearm or that someone is being unsafe with a firearm?

Who wouldn't want our children to be taught easy and effective ways to prevent accidents and avoid negligence?

Who wouldn't want to give children the tools necessary to avoid tragedy?

We can all agree that our children's safety comes before our preferences on whether or not we personally choose to exercise our inherent right to keep and bear arms.

The fact is, as an individual right, even if you don't have a gun in your home, others do.

Our children's safety comes before our personal preference on which organization happened to come up with the easy to remember phrase, Stop, Don't Touch, Run Away, Tell a Grownup.

You and I are the responsible Grownup in these lessons.

We are responsible for our children. It's our responsibility to keep them safe when they are with us and teach them to be safe when they are not with us.

I urge you to equip our children with this fundamental, uniform, decades proven effective, accident prevention education. After all, we all want our children to be safe, especially when we are not around to protect them ourselves.

Help Kansas children and Kansas communities survive and thrive by giving them the opportunity to trade in their fear for empowerment, because Education is the key to Safety.