

STATE OF KANSAS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



**REP. PATRICK PENN**  
District 85

**Proponent In-Person Testimony, HB 2304**  
**Representative Patrick Penn**  
**District 85**

Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

***I support HB 2304.***

*Education is a **must** when it pertains to our children.*

*I am a firm believer in the Right to Bear Arms, and I also believe there needs to be a component of education added, as well.*

*As you proceed today, please take into account the fact that one day, it may be your child or grandchildren that may come across a gun in a public or private space, and with this training, it can prevent the pain that so many have endured. **Let's protect our children and add this education component.***

The language of HB 2304 is plain in its intent, idea, and price tag. When the bill was introduced in the 2018 session, the estimated cost to implement these curriculum guidelines was \$2,500. That number comes from the fiscal note on HB 2460 as it was heard in the House Fed & State committee that year. According to records I've reviewed, it does not appear that the Department of Education submitted testimony on the bill for that hearing.

Even in 2021, when this bill ran as Sub. HB 2089, the Fiscal Note remained at the minimal impact of a mere \$2,500 to cover the cost of travel to incorporate the program and deliver any necessary materials.

In 2022, the bill was reintroduced as SB 522 and the Department of Education came out in vocal opposition to the bill. The department also raised its estimate of the cost to implement this simple bill to \$70,000.

This committee should be asking what changed in the Department of Education's interpretation of the bill to require the addition of \$67,500 to their estimate from one year to the next. If the Department of Education interprets this bill to require or even allow them to re-write the standards dictated by the bill, then I believe there is a need to clarify legislative intent. If the Department of Education could create any standards on firearm safety it wanted under this bill just like it can today, then there would be no reason for those of us who have been working on this bill for years to push the legislation and the opposition would be completely unfounded.

Through this bill, the NRA is providing its Gold Standard programming for firearm safety training for our Kansas kids and saving lives at no cost and negligible impact to the budget. In addition, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks program that was developed with great care would become the standard for higher grade levels. I would encourage this Committee to delve deeper into the Department's interpretation of the legislation's plain language and intent, as well as how it arrives at the higher price tag tacked onto the bill in 2021.

Let us now come together in strength to promote and ensure our children in Kansas are properly educated, in grade-appropriate fashion, on firearm accident prevention and how to practice gun safety in accordance with our Kansas law.

Here are two news links showing how this legislation, as written and plainly intended, is urgently needed to help – to whatever extent possible – prevent tragedies, such as what happened to 4-year old Makalah McKay and 13-year old Adam Toledo, from occurring here with our Kansas children:

1. <https://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/2021/8/5/22612190/4-year-old-girl-shot-inside-of-home-in-englewood>
2. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/family-13-year-boy-shot-dead-chicago-police/story?id=76893930>

Our fight now is to protect any other parent from experiencing the pain of losing a child due to a lack of training on the appropriate reaction when encountering a firearm. This legislative change will help in achieving that goal while leaving the final decision over whether to teach firearm safety up to each individual school board. This language has previously enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support, and it has passed favorably out of both the House and Senate in past years. I urge you to join me in support and vote “Yes” on House Bill 2304 when you have an opportunity to recommend it favorable to the full body. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,



Rep. Patrick Penn  
District 85