



Josh Boydston <josh@sixftover.org>

re: House Bill 2501; Senate Bill 356

Josh Boydston <josh@sixftover.org>

Draft To: H.Fed.State.Affairs@house.ks.gov

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Greetings. My name is Josh Boydston. I am a clinical social worker and life-long Kansan. I grew up in Miami County and have lived the last 16 years in Roeland Park, Kansas, in Johnson County. I have served in social service for 25 years, and have served in a unique position since 2023, as my non-profit serves the entire State of Kansas with suicide postvention (the interventions after a suicide loss has occurred- including advocacy for legislative reform). As we agree around the world- Suicide postvention is suicide prevention.

I am writing today in support of the measures outlined in House Bill 2501 and Senate Bill 356. There is unfortunately a increase in suicide death treend in Kansas, and of these death's there is an overwhelming correlation to firearm use as means for suicide death as a leading means. To put it plainly from best-practice research in lethal means, firearm access is the number cause of death tied to suicide. We have countless accounts of people who have had a suicide attempt by all other means and many have lived to receive help. The simple lethality involved with firearms makes this potential second chance impossible. In our field the research of people like Dr. Mike Anestis, <https://gunviolenceresearchcenter.rutgers.edu/node/11>, backed by the American Association of Suicide Prevention, the evidence supports the pathways for lethal means counseling, programs and ultimately demonstrate a reduction in loss of life associated with suicide by firearms means.

This is **not** legislation aimed at taking away Constitutional rights, or partisan, feeling driven policy. The empirical evidence supports initiatives like H.B. 2501, and S.B. 356- fundamental steps that positively impact the reduction of loss of life. Both sides of the aisle can and should support this notion as we are all public servants with a duty to protect our neighbor and fellow Kansan.

Kansans who experience the suicide loss of a loved one interact with our program daily. I cannot express the overwhelming trauma and negative impact I have heard first-hand from Kansans from small towns to urban cities. Many have witnessed their loved one's life end as a result of access to firearms. We have learned of experiences where there was no provision in the law to intervene when their loved one was suicidal and it was known they possessed a firearm. The pathway for real change is supported in this legislation. The hard data is available and we know we have access to evidenced-based solutions to save lives.

This is a win for all Kansans with your help and support. We will continue to serve suicide loss survivors with the critical support of the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), but your collective decision determines if the volume of suicide deaths in this state are prevented.

Please do not hesitate to call on me with any questions or comments you may have. We would be proud to present on suicide postvention or put forth any assistance to ensure a sound decision on suicide

Kind Regards,
Josh Boydston, Kansan

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Josh Boydston, LCSW, LSCSW | Kansas Lemon Aid Client Advocate
He|Him
w: www.sixftover.org
c: 913 415-3174
o: 313-288-2207
a: 4021 SW 10th St. Topeka, KS 66604

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