

I am writing in support of House Bill 2501. This bill is being introduced to provide civil immunity to firearms retailers who provide voluntary, temporary and responsible firearm storage options for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

The Johnson County Mental Health Center's Secure and Protect Initiative has partnered with the Armory Project to promote responsible firearm storage and prevent deaths by suicide in our communities. The Armory project works with local firearm retailers to provide a trusted storage option for firearm owners who want to protect themselves or their loved ones during a vulnerable time. Firearms are involved in 59% of suicide deaths in Kansas and 50% of suicide deaths in Johnson County, underscoring the urgent need for practical prevention strategies like the Armory Project. This legislation removes a significant legal concern for Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL's) in Kansas, allowing more retailers to participate, expanding access across Kansas communities.

Research shows that a suicide attempt often happens within 5 to 10 minutes of the decision to act. Providing voluntary, temporary storage is an evidence-based approach to reducing suicide risk by creating time and distance between someone experiencing a mental health crisis and a firearm.

Increasing voluntary firearm storage options, especially through trusted partners like local firearm retailers, honors personal choice and Second Amendment rights while also strengthening suicide prevention efforts and saving lives.

I look forward to your support of House Bill 2501.

Nancy Ingram, Member JOCO Mental Health Center Advisory Board
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