

## Testimony in Support of Kansas House Bill 2404

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Kansas House Bill 2404, which would make it a felony for individuals listed on the sex offender registry for crimes against children to enter school property. This legislation is a critical step toward ensuring the safety and well-being of our children, who deserve to learn and grow in an environment free from potential threats.

Schools are sanctuaries for education and development, but they can only fulfill this role if we prioritize the protection of our students. Allowing adults—particularly those with a documented history of harming children—to enter school grounds creates a dangerous vulnerability. Predators often rely on familiarity and trust to exploit their victims, and permitting such individuals to be present in schools risks normalizing their presence, potentially allowing them to be perceived as trusted adults by students and staff alike. This perception can erode the safeguards we strive to maintain and place our children in harm's way. By enacting HB 2404, we send a clear message that the safety of our students outweighs any argument for leniency toward those who have already violated that trust.

That said, I urge the committee to consider a narrow exception to this bill to ensure fairness and practicality. Specifically, I propose an exemption for individuals aged 18 to 21 who are still enrolled in and receiving services from a school district. These young adults, often transitioning out of special education programs or completing their high school education, should not be unduly penalized as they work toward rehabilitation and self-improvement under the supervision of school officials. With proper oversight and restrictions, this exception would balance accountability with the opportunity for redemption, without compromising the bill's core intent.

HB 2404 is a necessary measure to protect our children from those who have proven themselves a risk. I respectfully ask for your support in passing this legislation, with the suggested exception, to strengthen our schools as safe havens for learning and growth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Newcomer