

Hello my name is Kim Bergman and I support HB2404 and SB288. I am the mother of two young boys who attend public school in Johnson County, Kansas. I am also a survivor of child sexual abuse.

I was 12 years old when my gymnastics coach, David Byrd, began sexually abusing me. Over the years I have learned that I was not my coach's first victim or his last. There are at least 11 of us that we know of who were abused over the course of 20 years. There was 10 years between myself and the last known victim. I can only imagine how many of us there really are.

The abuse I endured profoundly impacted my life and inspired me to become a social worker. I spent several years working in child protective services and am now an advocate for abuse survivors and helping protect future children from being abused.

Sexual predators rarely stop after one victim. In fact, child sex offenders have one of the highest rates of recidivism.

My coach was finally convicted of abusing a child in 2008, but only served 2 years for his crimes as a "first time offender. He was never held accountable for abusing me or his other 9 known victims due to the statute of limitations.

David is now free in Wyandotte county, living with his new wife and her grandchildren, and recently told a former gymnast that he might see her around at her daughter's gymnastics competitions. Despite being a convicted sex offender, he has no intentions of staying away from children.

Child sexual abuse can happen anywhere that predators have access to children. Over 90% of victims are abused by someone they know or trust. Predators are often difficult for parents to identify. They convince their friends, family, and everyone around them that they are trustworthy and that they would never hurt a child. Why else would parents allow them to be around their children?

As a mom, I would feel safer sending my kids to school knowing that the spectators watching their swim meet haven't been convicted of possessing child

child sexual abuse material. That the parent helping with the school Halloween party hasn't been convicted of soliciting a child for sex. Or that the parent sitting at the lunch table with my child wasn't given a plea deal after molesting their niece at a sleepover.

As parents, we can't protect our children from all of the unknown dangers in the world, but HB2404 and SB288 would allow us to at least take a step in protecting them from a known danger, the convicted predators who have already been determined to be a danger to society. Why else would the courts post their names and pictures on a public sex offender registry?

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Protecting KS Children From Sexual Predators
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