

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Kellie Warren
Judicial Committee
State Capitol, Room 419-E
Topeka, KS 66612

Subject: Letter of Support for Senate House Bill 204

Dear Senator Warren,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate House Bill 204, which seeks to enhance the confidentiality of court records in criminal and juvenile offender cases. This bill is a crucial step toward protecting the privacy and safety of individuals involved in these sensitive legal matters, particularly survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

By mandating that criminal and juvenile justice cases remain sealed upon the filing of an arrest warrant until the warrant is executed or denied, this legislation upholds the principle of due process while preventing undue exposure of case details that could jeopardize the well-being of victims and defendants alike. Additionally, sealing all subpoenas in these cases, with unsealing permitted only if the court finds it serves the interest of justice, ensures that investigative processes remain secure and fair.

Survivors of sexual violence are especially vulnerable to unintended harm when their cases become public prematurely. Premature disclosure can lead to intimidation, retaliation, or unnecessary public scrutiny, deterring survivors from seeking justice. Senate House Bill 204 helps create a legal system that prioritizes confidentiality and security, empowering survivors to come forward without fear of further victimization.

Furthermore, applying this bill retroactively to pending cases ensures consistency in protecting individuals already navigating the justice system. The definition of “seal” as preventing public access to any information related to the case, warrant, or subpoena reinforces the bill’s intent to safeguard personal information and maintain the integrity of legal proceedings.

I urge you and your colleagues to support this essential legislation. Ensuring confidentiality in these cases not only strengthens our justice system but also demonstrates our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Julie Donelon
President & CEO