

The Crisis Center, Inc.

P.O. Box 1526
Manhattan, KS 66505-1526
Business: (785) 539-7935
Fax: (785) 539-8467



24-Hour Helpline: 1-800-727-2785 or text HEAL to 847411 or call (785) 539-2785 in Manhattan or (785) 762-8835 in Junction City

Proponent Testimony for SB 358 to the Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee February 4, 2026

Oral Testimony

Dear Chair Warren and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kathy Ray, and I am the Executive Director of The Crisis Center, Inc. (CCI). For over 47 years, CCI has provided free and confidential services to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and their children. CCI is a community-based domestic violence and sexual assault victim advocacy organization accredited by the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence. Based in Manhattan, Kansas, CCI serves a regional area comprised of Clay, Geary, Marshall, Pottawatomie, and Riley counties, including the Fort Riley military installation. We operate locations in Manhattan and Junction City and employ over 40 staff and volunteers who provide comprehensive, trauma-informed victim services. Services include a safe, confidential emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis helplines available by talk or text, crisis intervention, safety planning, legal advocacy and accompaniment, individual counseling and support groups, long-term support, and law enforcement co-response programs in Riley County and Junction City. In addition, CCI operates SafeLine Kansas, the 24/7 statewide helpline for domestic violence and sexual assault, ensuring that victims anywhere in Kansas can reach a trained advocate at any time.

In calendar year 2025, CCI served 746 unduplicated individuals, including 604 adults and 142 children. Our staff provided a total of 17,386 services, representing 7,652 hours of direct advocacy and support. We answered 3,448 calls and texts on our 24/7 crisis helplines. Through our emergency shelter, we housed 217 adults and children, providing 7,291 bed nights of safety for victims fleeing violence in their own homes. These numbers represent real people—many of whom relied on the justice system to prioritize their safety during moments of extreme vulnerability.

CCI also played a critical role in supporting the victims and survivors of Clark Petersen, a former Manhattan chiropractor convicted of multiple sexual offenses. The month-long trial resulted in convictions on 51 sex crime counts, including four counts of rape and 40 counts of aggravated sexual battery, among other serious offenses. In August 2025, a Riley County jury found Petersen guilty. Despite the severity of his convictions, he was allowed to return home on bond for the evening following the verdict. For the victims and survivors who had endured his abuse and the emotional toll of participating in a lengthy investigation and trial, this decision caused profound

fear, distress, and retraumatization. *How can someone who has just been convicted of such serious crimes - multiple counts of rape and a multitude of other serious sex offenses - be allowed to go home on bond?*

CCI provided an advocate every day of the trial to support the victims and survivors through the court proceedings – their testimonies and victim impact statements – reliving the details of the horrific abuse time and time again, only to see Clark Petersen be allowed to go home after conviction. In October 2025, Petersen was sentenced to 32 years in prison, but the harm caused by that brief release could not be undone.

The experience of these victims and survivors highlights a critical gap in Kansas law that SB 358 seeks to address. SB 358 is the result of a collaborative effort designed to require bond revocation for offenses that the Legislature has already determined are presumptive prison sentences, regardless of criminal history. Under the proposed changes, bond would be revoked for off-grid offenses, severity level 1–4 non-drug offenses, and severity level 1–2 drug offenses - all crimes that already fall above the presumptive prison threshold within Kansas' sentencing structure. In other words, SB 358 aligns bond decisions with existing legislative intent – that individuals convicted of the most serious crimes should be treated as presumptive prison offenders.

From a victim advocacy perspective, this consistency matters. Allowing individuals convicted of the most serious violent and sexual offenses to remain free on bond, however briefly, creates real and immediate safety concerns for victims and survivors. It undermines confidence in the criminal justice system, increases fear of retaliation, and places an emotional burden on victims and survivors at the very moment they should be experiencing accountability and validation. SB 358 would reduce unnecessary retraumatization by ensuring that once a jury has found a defendant guilty of a presumptive prison offense, the safety of victims and the community is prioritized.

For the victims and survivors we serve, accountability and safety are inseparable. Senate Bill 358 represents a measured, thoughtful change that is consistent with Kansas sentencing policy and responsive to the lived experiences of victims and survivors.

On behalf of The Crisis Center, Inc., the victims and survivors we serve, and the advocates who walk alongside them, I respectfully request your support for SB 358.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathy Ray, MSW
Executive Director