

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

In-Person Testimony

Dear Chair Warren and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Abby Stark**, and I am a survivor of sexual assault. I am currently a 20-year-old college student, and I submit this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 358** because the issues it addresses directly also affect survivors like me—young people who are still trying to feel safe while building our futures.

Coming forward as a survivor at my age was extremely overwhelming. As a college student, I was already navigating independence, academics, social life, while also carrying the weight of this new trauma. Then reporting and participating in the justice process required extreme courage and trust in a system I hoped would protect me. Like many survivors, I entered the process believing that accountability would bring some sort of sense of safety and stability.

Learning about situations in which individuals convicted of serious crimes are allowed to remain free on bond after conviction is deeply unsettling. Although my experience is not connected to the Clark Petersen case, I strongly identify with the fear and distress such decisions cause. For survivors, especially young survivors, and all survivors, the period after a conviction should allow space to heal. Instead, knowing that someone who has been found guilty is allowed to return home can make the world feel unsafe again.

As a 20-year-old college student, safety is not an abstract concept. It affects where I feel comfortable walking, studying, socializing, and living. Decisions that delay accountability intensify anxiety and reinforce the feeling that survivors must continue to carry the burden of fear, even after a verdict has been reached. These moments can reopen trauma and undermine trust in a system that survivors depend on for protection.

This is why Senate Bill 358 is so important. SB 358 ensures that once a person is convicted of certain serious crimes, accountability is immediate. This bill is not about punishment, it is about safety, dignity, and respect. It recognizes that survivors, including young people like me, deserve to feel protected after conviction, not left to manage renewed fear and uncertainty.

I am encouraged that SB 358 reflects collaboration between survivors, legislators, and community leaders. Survivor-informed policy is essential to creating a justice system that acknowledges the real and lasting impact of sexual violence.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 358 and advance it forward. This legislation is a meaningful step toward a justice system that prioritizes survivor safety and affirms that accountability matters.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Abby Stark

Manhattan, Kansas Resident