

Date: February 6, 2023  
Bill Number: SB 116  
Disposition: Opponent  
Name and Identification: Aarushi Pore - student

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

Every single day in America, students like me live in fear: fear of our learning being disrupted by violence. Fear of our present day at school being our last. We have been living in fear like it is normal to do so, hoping that our government can step up and provide effective change for the generation-long issues that we have been facing. Seeing bills like SB 116 being proposed and promoted in our local government instills nothing but disappointment inside myself and every student in Kansas that has been living in relentless fear, because it does nothing to address the impending issue of ineffective gun control and school shootings, yet it does everything to push political agendas.

In 2022, USA Today reported that there were 50 school shootings in America - the highest amount of school shootings that we have seen in the past 5 years. This amount is only going to increase if we do not take effective action against this issue. Looking at the content of SB 116 makes it evident that no action at all will be taken to address the disproportionate amount of school shootings. The bill includes providing the NRA Eddie Eagle program to elementary schoolers, and the Hunter Education in Our Schools program starting from 6th grade to 12th grade. Firstly, it has been established for decades that the NRA Eddie Eagle program does not work. A 2004 study conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that in real-life settings - children fail to retain the information taught in the Eddie Eagle program because it is simply ineffective. When it comes to the Hunter Education in Our Schools program, it's essentially another way of saying that students will be taught how to use a gun in the name of being "safe and responsible members of the hunting community" as the NRA website states. This is far from what students have been asking for - teaching students how to use guns will only result in even more student led gun violence, leading to our schools being full of chaos and catastrophe.

Less than a year ago, I testified against an extremely similar bill to this one with the same goals and intentions. This time, I want to ask you all: what will it take for you all to realize that you need to start caring about keeping every student and staff member safe? How many more students need to come here for you all to understand this message? How many years will it take for our voices to be heard? It's time we start thinking of keeping our communities safe rather than our wallets, and this can only be achieved by voting in opposition of the presented bill.

