

## Written Testimony

Thank you Mr. Chairman and committee for allowing me to testify on HB 2370. I, Katherine Goodwin, a recent graduate of Blue Valley North High School, am a survivor of sexual assault. I was in an abusive relationship for nine months when I was sixteen and seventeen.

According to the 2022 Kansas Bureau of Investigation report, the majority of victims of sexual battery are women under twenty years old. The majority of perpetrators happen to be males under twenty years old. I fall into that demographic, and I am a survivor of child-on-child sexual battery. I am a strong advocate for sexual violence prevention and many friends of mine will come to me to talk about "bad" or "scary" sexual experiences. Almost all of them do not even realize that they did not freely, overtly, and continuously give consent. Teenagers do not know what consent means, and it is evidently harming the youth of Kansas.

I am calling for Kansas to define consent in state law and pass HB 2370. One of the first things I did when I realized what had happened to me was more than a scary or bad story, was looking at the Kansas laws regarding sexual battery. I wondered if Kansas had decided whether or not what happened to me was enough to be considered a crime.

I understand that previous court decisions have “defined” consent over the years, however, teenagers still do not understand. They are the ones being affected the most by the lack of a common definition. Are we protecting our teenagers, our young girls, if we cannot even define what consent is? How was sixteen-year-old me supposed to know what consent was if Kansas had not recognized it in law?

When the parameters for sexual battery include “Sexual battery is the touching of a victim who is not the spouse of the offender, who is 16 or more years of age and **who does not consent** thereto, with the intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of the offender or another.”

I can say with confidence that if my perpetrator and I knew what consent really was, it could have prevented what had happened to me. It could have prevented the trauma I suffer every day. The panic attacks, the nightmares, the disassociation, and the hours spent at therapy. Additionally, having consent defined in Kansas law can guide parents in their conversations with their children.

We have an obligation to recognize consent in Kansas law because we have an obligation to protect the young Kansans. Thank you. I’ll stand for questions at the appropriate time.

