

Date of Testimony: March 7, 2022

Bill Number: SB522

Disposition: Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Name: Melissa Reichmeier

Email Address: melreich50@gmail.com

Cell Phone: 913-961-4500

Interest Represented: Self

Chair Olson and members of the committee,

My name is Melissa Reichmeier and I have lived in Johnson County since moving to Kansas in 1985. I have married and raised 3 children who are now adults residing in the area.

As a Kansas parent, hoping to be a grandparent one day, I am concerned about children's access to firearms. A young friend told me that his son was at a school friend's house, and the friend showed his son a rifle kept under his parent's bed. To be honest, things like this never occurred to me when my children were little, but now I encourage young parents to inquire about secure firearm storage if children will be in other homes.

While training is important, SB 522 has NOT been proven to work to keep our kids safe. Research has found that programs like Eddie Eagle do not reduce the likelihood that children will mishandle firearms in an unsupervised situation.

Rather than introducing into our schools a safety program that doesn't work, we should be addressing the root cause of why our children are dying by gun violence. Data shows that unintentional shootings involving our children are overwhelmingly due to easy access to unsecured firearms.

We also know 5.4 million American children live in homes with guns that are both loaded and unlocked. Research shows that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with an 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children.

We adults can protect vulnerable children by storing guns locked, unloaded and separately from ammunition, and taking steps to make sure children never get unauthorized access to unsecured guns.

I strongly encourage members to vote NO on this dangerous bill.

Thank you.

Melissa Reichmeier

Overland Park, Kansas