

Testimony of Amanda Winch
Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
January 23, 2023, 9:00AM

Dear Chairman Carpenter, Committee members, and staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Amanda Winch. I am a lifelong Kansan who grew up in Wichita, KS and now reside in Overland Park, KS with my family. I am a parent of 2 young boys, an alumna of Kansas State University and I am also a volunteer with Kansas Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a nonpartisan, grassroots gun violence prevention organization, dedicated to advancing policies that respect the Second Amendment and protect our communities from gun violence. I became involved with Moms Demand Action over 7 years ago because, as a new mother, I thought it was important to raise awareness about gun safety and felt that no parent should have to endure losing a child in such a senseless way.

I am testifying today because HCR 5020 is a dangerous resolution that poses a direct threat to Kansas public safety laws that protect our communities by keeping guns out of the hands of people who we all agree shouldn't have them.

Kansas already has some of the weakest gun laws in the nation and adding a constitutional amendment of this nature is completely unnecessary and would further deteriorate public safety in our state. Between the years of 2012 to 2021, the rate of gun homicides in Kansas has increased 102%. This is an astonishing figure which correlates to the weakening of gun laws during this time frame. It is evident that loosening gun restrictions does not decrease gun violence and in fact will have adverse effects. (*Source: <https://everystat.org/#Kansas>*)

This bill poses several significant concerns:

If adopted, strict scrutiny would threaten to eliminate Kansas's most crucial public safety laws, including:

- **Prohibition on Gun Possession by Convicted Felons:** After strict scrutiny amendments passed in Louisiana and Missouri, convicted felons challenged state laws that prohibit felons from possessing firearms. At least one lower court found that Louisiana's law prohibiting felons from having guns was unconstitutional. Fortunately, the Louisiana Supreme Court reversed this ruling.
- **Prohibitions on Gun Possession by Domestic Abusers:** In Louisiana, after strict scrutiny passed, a convicted domestic abuser challenged the constitutionality of a state law prohibiting possession of a firearm by people convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes.

Strict scrutiny laws make state taxpayers fund the flow of lawsuits brought by criminal defendants.

- The Missouri State Auditor determined that Louisiana's strict scrutiny law led to "significant time, effort, and expenditures by Louisiana's public defenders and district attorney's offices," imposing "significant workload and related costs on the Louisiana government." The auditor projected that a strict scrutiny law in Missouri **would ultimately cost Missouri taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.**

I encourage members of the committee to vote **NO** on House **Resolution 5020**.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.