

January 19, 2023

Dear Members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee,

I respectfully write to you as a Kansas voter, teacher and mother to ask that you oppose House Bill 2304. We have all seen the heartbreaking tragedies that occur every year when children encounter an unsecured gun. The intention to stop these tragic shootings is a good one, but there are several reasons why passing this bill would be a misguided effort.

1. The Eddie Eagle program has been proven to be ineffective in deterring children from handling guns when they encounter them unexpectedly. Numerous studies show that even when children are able to repeat the Eddie Eagle message, this does not translate into applying the message in real life situations. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14702451/>
2. Numerous experiments have shown that children will follow their natural curiosity when they encounter guns and may be unable to tell real guns from toy guns, even after following the Eddie Eagle program. <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/video/young-kids-guns-parents-22325589>
3. The responsibility for keeping children safe from guns should be on the adults. The most dangerous aspect of the Eddie Eagle program is that it gives parents a false sense of security that their children will know how to handle guns, instead of informing parents how to store firearms safely in the first place.
4. Local school districts should control decisions about what materials to use to implement their curriculum, as they do on other subjects. That is one of the reasons this bill was opposed by the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA) when it was proposed in the Senate.
5. Parents should choose when and where this topic is introduced, especially if their family has had traumatic experiences with guns. There are other programs available for parents and their local schools to choose. What might be right for one community, may not be right for another.

I hope you will agree that, in this matter of life and death regarding children, partisanship should be set aside and you should do the right thing for Kansas children. Our children's lives are too important to be used to play favorites with the NRA or any other organization.

I urge you to vote NO on House Bill 2304.

Claudia Olea

Lawrence, KS