



Date: February 08, 2023

Bill: SB 116: Standardizing firearms safety programs in school districts.
Disposition: Support
Testimony: Written

Name: Kent Keene
Contact: kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org | (816) 280-8967
Organization: Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I write to express our support for Senate Bill 116 (SB 116). By directing the Kansas State Board of Education to develop guidelines for a firearm safety curriculum that would be available to public school districts, SB 116 would allow the Board of Education to provide educators with the critical resources needed to introduce students to responsible firearm handling in a safe and controlled classroom setting while potentially recruiting the next generation of sportsmen and women in the Sunflower State.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Firearms have long been closely related to Kansas' sporting conservation heritage. First, firearms are often a key component needed to participate in many hunting and recreational shooting activities in which sportsmen and women engage. This relationship also benefits the American System of Conservation Funding through which excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, along with other sources of revenue, provide the bulk of funding for all state fish and wildlife management agencies, including the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP). Given this association between firearms, conservation funding, and opportunities for sportsmen and women, we support opportunities to introduce students to the safe and responsible use of firearms in a classroom setting.

While participation in recreational shooting sports has increased, participation in hunting prior to the COVID-19 pandemic has been steadily declining. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the lack of knowledge transferred from one generation to the next. It is

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through this transfer that many adults were introduced to the safe and responsible use of firearms. Fortunately, by allowing local public school districts to incorporate firearm safety curriculums approved by the Kansas State Board of Education, including KDWP's Hunter Education curriculum, in the classroom, we have the opportunity to potentially recruit the next generation of sportsmen and women while ensuring that they understand the importance of safe and responsible behaviors around firearms.

It is also important to point out that, in the case of KDWP's Hunter Education curriculum, responsible firearm handling is but one of several important topics discussed. Among the other topics included in this curriculum are general hunter safety, the role of hunters in the conservation of Kansas' wildlife resources, wildlife management techniques, among others. Recognizing the depth and breadth of these topics, it is clear that this curriculum not only represents a chance to educate students on the responsible handling of firearms, but also an opportunity to recruit the next generation of sportsmen and women, the original conservationists.

In conclusion, CSF asks the Committee to support SB 116 and work with the Board of Education to ensure that Kansas' students have the opportunity to be properly introduced to safe and responsible firearm handling in a highly controlled classroom setting. If you have questions or would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,



Kent Keene
Assistant Manager, Lower Midwestern States and Agriculture Policy
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org | 816-280-8967

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