

Good afternoon,

I graduated from Saint Thomas Aquinas in May 2021 and was a student and victim of Joseph Heidesch, the choir director, with charges currently pending, including multiple charges of breach of privacy.

There are some higher counts, but the breach of privacy statutes with allegations of hidden cameras in areas where female choir students, primarily minors, changed clothes or tried on costumes, currently have a very low threshold and severity level in terms of sexual exploitation crimes.

I am support of SB 385 and the revisions, and I really wish this bill would have been passed by the legislature during the last session it was introduced because that would have a huge impact today.

SB 385 amends K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 22-4902 as follows:

K.S.A. 22-4902

(b) "Sex offender" includes any person who:....*"(7) is convicted of breach of privacy, as defined in K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 21-60101(a)(6), (a)(7), or (a)(8), and amendments thereto;*

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 22-4906 is hereby amended to read as follows: 22-4906. (a) (1) Except as provided in subsection (c), if convicted of any of the following offenses, an offender's duration of registration shall be, if confined, 15 years after the date of parole, discharge or release, whichever date is most recent, or, if not confined, 15 years from the date of conviction: (M) *breach of privacy, as defined in K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 21-6101(a) (6), (a)(7) or (a)(8), and amendments thereto;*

The inclusion of actions in violation of the breach of privacy statutes that involve sexual exploitation of minors, and especially through a trusted or person of authority such as a teacher, need to be expanded and the severity level increased to protect those minors.

I was a minor during all of these alleged charges pending.

Choir and show choir were some of my best memories of high school. It was like one big family, and everyone loved each other. We all looked up to Heidesch as a trusted male figure in our lives and for many of us, choir was a safe haven. Now we look back and it's tainted with memories where we thought we were with someone we could trust.

This has had several impacts on my mental and physical health. I have fears, anxiety, and panics of changing clothes, even in my dorm or my bedroom at home. It is extremely challenging to go out in public because of the fear of having to use a public restroom.

The thought of him and so many other offenders not having to register as sex offenders makes me terrified for the day they are released from their sentences. Frankly, I think it would be too easy for them to move on with their lives after the fact, while we all still live in fear and struggle

to move on with our own. It worries me for other people that they may encounter and further victimize.

While this might have been “just some videos”, it has had a huge impact on myself and my friends and all of the victims in many ways. It has affected our families. It has affected what we had chosen to study in college. It has affected our personal relationships. I can’t even hug my parents anymore because of the trauma this has caused me. I and many others now have serious trust issues around any male adults in our lives because Joseph Heidesch victimized us, and we trusted him.

Someone told me that it was okay to be mad or angry, but I said I was not mad or angry. I am hurt, violated, and forever impacted by someone who I trusted; someone I would have reached out to if I needed something.

I am in support of this bill and other changes that can be made to protect victims like myself, my friends, my fellow choir members (whether identified as victims or not), and other victims of similar crimes.