

Testimony of Claudia Patrick
Volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
January 23, 2024, 9:00AM

Good afternoon, Chairman Carpenter, Committee members, and staff. Thank you for acknowledging my testimony today.

My name is Claudia Patrick.

I am the wife of a Sheriff's Deputy in Wyandotte, CO, KS. I know what effect gun violence can have on first responders. The amount of calls that involve guns has risen in the past few years. Laws that allow anyone to carry a firearm in public without a license, background check, or training pose a threat to all law enforcement agencies and the public in general. Police agency groups and individuals opposed these types of bills. Our elected leaders must be consistent with what they preach: If they really want to support policing in this country, they must stop passing dangerous gun laws and instead pass commonsense preventive measures.

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.

One evening, I was at Sonic with my daughter and a friend of hers, getting some snacks, when a group of young men started shooting because of an argument they were having. Our lives were put at risk, and we have not forgotten the sound of the shots and the feeling I had trying to protect the children.

My experience leads me to emphasize that Kansas suffers from gun violence rates above the national average today. In 2021, Kansas lawmakers overrode the governor's veto, voting to allow 18- to 20-year-olds to carry concealed, loaded handguns in public without a permit. The state now maintains none of the foundational laws needed to protect the public from gun violence.

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.