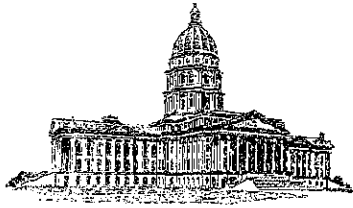


State of Kansas
House of Representatives

State Capitol
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-7679
michael.houser@house.ks.gov



6891 SW 10th St.
Columbus, KS 66725
(620) 704-3817
mhouser_2010@yahoo.com

Mike Houser
Representative, 1st District

The Honorable John Barker
Committee of Federal and State Affairs
Statehouse Room 346-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Subject: HB2308 - Suicide evaluation upon admission to certain treatment facilities.

Chairman Barker, and the rest of my colleagues on the Fed and State Affairs Committee, I stand before you today in support of HB 2308. It was almost two years ago when the family of Gordon Peterson asked me for help in making something good come out of the terrible loss of their husband and father. The family wanted to spare as many other families they could from the heartbreak and agony they have had to endure themselves for so many years now.

Gordon had a drug problem. He had checked himself into a private rehab center for help with his addictions and was trying to make a change for the better. The family was hopeful and thought they saw some light at the end of the tunnel. No one knows why he did what he did, or what was going on in his mind at the time, but on the evening of the very same day he checked in for help, Gordon took his own life.

The number of suicides in Kansas grows bigger each year, with 512 in 2016. We are not here condemning anyone or any organization. We are here to try and prevent more Kansas families from losing their husbands, wives, sons, or daughters to suicide. When I first started working on this bill, I asked research to check and see what the standard screening protocol was when someone admitted themselves in for rehabilitation. They couldn't find one. With that in mind, we set out to create one. HB 2308 is what we came up with.

We feel that every single person admitted in for rehab should undergo some type of screening or evaluation to see if they have an inclination to commit suicide. If they should be determined to be suicidal, the rehab facility should take the appropriate steps to insure the patient's safety. That is all this bill does. It makes sure people are protected.

I have enlisted the help of some people with knowledge in this subject, and have testimony from them that may answer some of your questions. I hope you can join me and help give this family some closure after all these years by making this become a reality. If it saves just one family from the heartache this family has endured, it will be worth it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rep. Michael Houser", written over a thin horizontal line.