

Dear Committee-

My life changed forever on June 26, 2017.

I had just left for vacation and was gone just one day when I was woken up to a phone call that shattered my world. It was another mother crying and asking if it were true. I had no idea what she was talking about until she let me know my 18-year old son, Justice, was dead. I was helpless, confused, and lost struggling to find out details so far away. No one would tell me anything. Justice had just graduated from high school and had a promising career in sports as he was heading to college. But that night, a 16 year old and 17 year old boy, had found a gun in an unlocked car and made a plan to rob my son. In an instant, every child in that car had their lives change, some ended forever, others ended with life behind bars, and so devastatingly, Justice's friend, who witnessed the murder, will forever feel the trauma. Our whole community mourned. Hundreds of children gathered and cried and prayed at our home and again at his gravesite, because we know gun violence affects the entire community.

18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds commit gun homicides at a rate nearly four times higher than adults 21 and older. Firearms are the 2nd-leading cause of death among children and teens in Kansas. 18 year olds are often still in high school and should be worried about SAT scores and which college town will be the most fun to live in, not whether a peer, whose executive function part of their brain isn't even fully developed, is carrying a loaded gun. They deserve better from you.

I am urging you, as a grieving mother to reject **HB 2059**, which would allow teenagers to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public, undermining the common sense safety laws that keep Kansas communities safe

Angela Lee