



KANSAS CHAPTER

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

January 27, 2021

To: Chairman Barker and Members of the House Federal & State Affairs Committee:

RE: Testimony in Opposition to HB 2059

My name is Dr. Kimberly Molik and I am the state chair of the Committee on Trauma for Kansas. I am also the Pediatric Trauma Medical Director at Wesley Medical Center. Wesley Medical Center is a level two Pediatric Trauma Center that treats over 400 pediatric trauma patients annually. In 2020, the amount of firearm injuries in children has tripled. Many of these firearm injuries were either fatal or severely life-altering and half were unintentional / accidental shootings.

HB 2059 aims to lower the age of provisional licenses from 21 to 18. Research by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has shown that the brain of an 18 year old adolescent is still maturing and lacks the ability to make intellectual and rational decisions. Instead, their decisions are more impulsive and without regard to potential consequences.

An August 2020 journal by the American Academy of Pediatrics cited that the adolescent brain can be characterized with: impulsiveness, aggressiveness, recklessness, and vulnerability to peer pressure. The prefrontal cortex is the last area of the brain to mature. The prefrontal cortex is associated with reasoning and rational decision making. Brain maturation in the prefrontal cortex area is not believed to occur until at least age 20.

Furthermore, many young adults remain living with their parents longer than previous generations. The median age that a child moves out is 19 years. Some studies even indicate up to 32% of Americans ages 18-34 still live with their parents. Allowing those 18 years and older to have provisional licenses could potentially place a firearm in the hands of younger siblings still in the home.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2059 and potentially placing firearms in the hands of those that are still maturing developmentally.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Molik, M.D. FACS

Kansas State Chair Committee on Trauma (COT)