



**To:** Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

**Re:** SB 522: Standardizing firearm safety education programs in school districts

**Position:** Support

**Date:** March 14, 2022

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Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I write to express our support for Senate Bill 522 (SB 522). By directing the Kansas State Board of Education to develop guidelines for a firearm safety curriculum that would be available to public school districts to implement at their discretion, SB 522 would allow the Board of Education to provide educators with the critical resources needed to introduce students to responsible firearm handling in a safe and controlled classroom setting while potentially recruiting the next generation of sportsmen and women in the Sunflower State.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

Firearms have long been closely related to Kansas' sporting and conservation heritage. Notably, firearms are often a key component needed to participate in many hunting and recreational shooting activities in which sportsmen and women engage. Likewise, this relationship also benefits the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF) through which excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, along with other sources of revenue, provide the bulk of funding for all state fish and wildlife management agencies, including the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP). Given this association between firearms, conservation funding, and opportunities for sportsmen and women, we support opportunities to introduce students to the safe and responsible use of firearms in a classroom setting.

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While participation in recreational shooting sports has increased, participation in hunting prior to the pandemic had been steadily declining. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons, not the least of which are the potential consequences for conservation funding through the aforementioned ASCF and the lack of knowledge transferred from one generation to the next. It is through this transfer that many adults, including myself, were introduced to the safe and responsible use of firearms. Fortunately, by allowing local public school districts to incorporate firearm safety curriculums approved by the Kansas State Board of Education, including KDWP's Hunter Education curriculum, in the classroom, we have the opportunity to potentially recruit the next generation of sportsmen and women while ensuring that they understand the importance of safe and responsible behaviors around firearms.

It is also important to point out that, in the case of KDWP's Hunter Education curriculum, responsible firearm handling is but one of several important topics discussed. Among the other topics included in this curriculum are general hunter safety, the role of hunters in the conservation of Kansas' wildlife resources, wildlife management techniques, among others. Recognizing the depth and breadth of these topics, it is clear that this curriculum not only represents a chance to educate students on the responsible handling of firearms, but also an opportunity to recruit the next generation of sportsmen and women, the original conservationists.

In conclusion, CSF asks the Committee to support SB 522 and work with the Board of Education to ensure that Kansas' students can be properly introduced to safe and responsible firearm handling in a highly controlled classroom setting. If you have questions or would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,



Kent Keene  
Assistant Manager, Lower Midwestern States and Agriculture Policy  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
[kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org) | 816-280-8967