

Chairman and Rep. Owens and members of the Kansas House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice,

My name is Lisa Vayda. I am a pharmacist and I reside in Wichita, in KS Senate District 16 and KS House District 99. I am a proponent of House Bill 2487, a bill providing immunity from prosecution for certain drug crimes when persons seek or provide medical assistance related to the use of a controlled substance.

As a Kansas citizen, health care provider, economist, community advocate, and mother, I have worked for several years battling this awful opioid epidemic. The grim facts are that drug overdose deaths are increasing in our community with 314 overdose deaths reported in 2022 in Sedgwick County. (<https://www.sedgwickcounty.org/forensic-science/data-and-statistics/>) Furthermore, Sedgwick County has the 2nd highest opioid mortality vulnerability score in Kansas. (<https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24703/2022-Opioid-Vulnerability-Analysis-PDF>) Additionally, Kansas and Wyoming are the only two states in the U.S. that do not have a Good Samaritan Fatal Overdose Prevention Law. (<https://legislativeanalysis.org/good-samaritan-fatal-overdose-prevention-and-drug-induced-homicide-summary-of-state-laws/>)

In 2023, I helped Safe Streets Wichita distribute 6,733 naloxone kits throughout Wichita. Time and time again, the recipients thanked us because they wanted to carry this life saving antidote and were afraid to call 911 for medical assistance. Sometimes their fear was because they had small amounts of drugs, paraphernalia, or had taken drugs themselves. More often, it was because they were afraid that they would get in trouble or be arrested due to being on parole, on probation, or had past issues with law enforcement and the judicial system. While I support this bill, I ask for clarification and amendment of KS HB2487 that would extend immunity for persons who are on parole or probation and seeking medical assistance in addition to the immunity from certain drug crimes.

I am representing many Kansas Citizens who have shared their heartbreaking narratives about their child, loved one, colleague, or friend who might be alive today if someone had sought medical assistance or called 911. I ask that you pass this bill so that saving a life is shown to be more important than making an arrest.

Respectfully submitted,

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