

# A PLEA FOR SAFETY

An estimated one million people cheered with friends and family as confetti rained down at the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl Parade and Rally, until gunshots were fired. People ran and police swarmed the area within minutes. A celebration turned to tragedy, with more than 20 injured and one person dead. And already, legislators are acting like nothing even happened. The event was meant to be historic for the happiness and pride our city experienced together, but now we will remember it as the 48th mass shooting of this year.

We have heard about countless shootings and lives lost across our gun-plagued country. We have experienced it firsthand with the shooting at the Jewish Community Center in 2014, the Olathe East High School shooting from 2022 and the Oak Park Mall shooting from last year. 2012 BVNW graduate Erin Langhofer was shot and killed while standing in line at a food truck at First Fridays in downtown KC in 2019. She was an innocent bystander and had not been involved in any kind of altercation before shots were fired, yet her life was cut short because yet another person was carrying a gun. We should not have to be afraid every time we leave our homes, nor live in a world where this is tolerated.

There are restrictions on drugs, driving and even food; almost everything we encounter in

our lives has regulations, yet logic and reason are ignored when it comes to firearms. In the United States, guns are the single greatest cause of death for our age group, yet nothing is being done about it. Lawmakers ask for our support, but do nothing to support us. They say they want to protect us, but have let us down time and time again.

After the parade and rally tragedy, KC Mayor Quinton Lucas said he had faith in the legal process and emphasized “enough is enough,” but he glazed over the fact that Missouri has some of the loosest gun laws in the country. We are appalled to hear about another shooting every day and no one doing anything to stop it. When someone says they are sending “thoughts and prayers” to victims, that is not enough and does not provide us any reassurance. In fact, it only pisses us off.

Hoping for a better society accomplishes nothing if there are no actions being taken. Listening to political figures convince you they “care” does not make the world safer, but laws would. Regulations would. Taking a stance and actually working to save lives would.

We are done feeling unsafe everywhere we go. Changes must be made and steps must be taken. We need help, guidance and safety. This is a plea for someone to take gun violence seriously and actually do something about it. Please.