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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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The following column is by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

School safety a priority for us all

In the past several weeks, we've seen several horrific acts of violence take place in America's schools. These events are extremely disturbing to all of us, but particularly to those of us who are parents, since we expect our children to be safe when we send them to school each day.

These acts of school violence also remind us all of the need for vigilance when it comes to keeping our children safe at school. The Kansas Highway Patrol operates the Kansas School Safety Hotline – **1-877-626-8203** – which allows anyone to provide anonymous information about a potential act of school violence. If you suspect someone is planning to commit violence, please call the hotline or local law enforcement immediately. The hotline has received more than 3,000 calls since it was established in 1999, and more than 700 of those were referred to local law enforcement for further investigation.

In addition to the hotline, we're taking action to further promote the health and safety of Kansas students. Leaders from Kansas' schools, law enforcement, health care and other related areas are coming together as part of the Commission on Health and Safety of our Schools, which I formally created this week. These leaders started meeting earlier this year on ways to improve the health and safety of our children. The commission's focus won't be limited to school violence, but that's one of the areas where we can help schools be better prepared for an emergency.

Their efforts, the continuing efforts of law enforcement and school officials, and the assistance of students and the public, will hopefully prevent future tragedies in our schools.

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