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**Written Neutral Testimony to House Bill 2768**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2768.

The Coalition to End Homelessness in Wichita/Sedgwick County brings together faith communities, nonprofits, local and state government, businesses, and community stakeholders to achieve a single goal: ending homelessness in Sedgwick County. We pursue this mission through housing, supportive services, and community-wide partnerships, which includes private landlords. Ending homelessness requires getting people without homes into them.

The proposed bill helps us achieve our mission by expanding access to housing to the families we serve experiencing homelessness. It also helps ensure less Kansans will become homeless by expanding access to the housing market to renters of all income situations, including veterans and working families.

In 2025, the Coalition worked with private landlords to house 1,144 Sedgwick County residents. This often required negotiating with landlords to accept multiple payments from sources such as charitable funds, Veterans benefits, SSI/SSDI, child support, and gig-work income, alongside tenants' earnings. Not all landlords were willing to accept tenants with mixed or nontraditional income sources, often preferring income that was solely W-2 employment based. As a result, otherwise qualified applicants were screened out of properties—even when their combined income sources demonstrated a clear ability to pay the rent in full.

Also in 2025, 2,077 Kansans became homeless for the first time in Sedgwick County alone. Many were part of the "ALICE" population—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, but Employed—working Kansans living paycheck to paycheck, for whom a flat tire or unexpected illness can trigger a cascade into homelessness. Statewide, 38% of households are ALICE. In Sedgwick County, 52% of ALICE families are rent-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. This represents 27,175 families at risk of homelessness and entering an already overstretched system.

These families don't need to enter the homeless services system. They turn first to their families and friends, to their church communities, and to other trusted support networks. Often, tenants can pay a substantial portion of the rent themselves and need just one supporter to make an additional payment. However, landlords can currently refuse payments from multiple sources. This bill would ensure that Kansans can rely on their own support networks to help meet housing costs and avoid evictions for lack of payment solely because rent is paid through more than one source. By preventing these unnecessary evictions, we can better focus homeless services on those with no other support.

We offer this information to assist policymakers in understanding how HB 2768 may affect our capacity to end homelessness, ensure community-wide housing stability, and respond to local housing needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.