JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS
Mental Health

Monday, February 23, 2026

Representative Sean Tarwater
Chair, House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
300 SW 10th Street, Room 274-W
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Proponent Testimony to the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
re: House Bill 2768

Chair Tarwater and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony for HB 2768.

House Bill 2768 would require landlords to accept multiple payments if rent is paid on time and in full. In addition, it would require landlords to consider certain income of a tenant or prospective tenant when demonstrating income as a condition of qualifying for housing.

Landlords, particularly large corporate ones, often use automated rental application screening and payment systems that ignore lawful income, such as VA benefits, SSI/SSDI, child support, and cash earnings, and block multiple payments *even when* families are trying to stay current. HB 2768 addresses this problem by ensuring that landlords consider all lawful income when applying standard income criteria. Also, this bill provides families with the ability to make multiple payments as long as the full rent is paid on time. This can be especially crucial when events such as health issues or job changes create financial challenges for a renter, leading to seeking help from a family member or charitable organization.

Current restrictive practices by landlords greatly impact the individuals that my team and I serve, causing excessive stress and frequently consuming county personnel hours. In one recent example, a client renting in Lenexa had to change her normal payment method after she lost her job while caring for two aging parents, both of whom were in health crises. My client's partner, who has disability income, was able to pay part of the rent and my client was approved for emergency rent assistance from another source for the remaining portion. Due to the landlord's policy against multiple payments, their restrictions on payment methods, and limitations including that my client lacks transportation and their bank not providing cashier's check services, my client struggled to come up with a solution. She was finally able to make the payment with hours of logistical support from her case manager, but despite her best effort by that time she had racked up over $100 in late fees.

In another example an elderly client of mine, who was newly diagnosed with leukemia and struggling with severe depression and vertigo, went through a similar situation. Although her HUD voucher paid most of her rent, her landlord refused to accept my client's payment for her portion of the rent because it was a "partial payment," even though my client was and had consistently been paying on time. Due to difficulty communicating with the leasing agents, who either would not respond to messages or gave conflicting answers, my client ended up being unable to resolve the issue before she was late on rent and had received an eviction notice.

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Eventually, with support from the Housing Authority and lawyers with the Disability Rights Center of Kansas, we learned that the landlord was refusing payments due to the client having an outstanding fee that they were not aware of. The issue was eventually resolved without an eviction, but not before my client endured weeks of extreme stress and had accrued late fees.

House Bill 2768 supports community stability and workforce reliability by keeping veterans, seniors, and working families housed, while also preserving landlords' ability to collect full balances, charge late fees, and move forward with eviction when obligations aren't met. It provides a common-sense solution that will allow renters to honor their financial commitments with less stress and reduce unnecessary strain on agency and charitable resources caused by restrictive rental practices.

Thank you for your time and support for HB 2768.

Sincerely,

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