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To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development
From: Justin Gust, Vice President of Community Engagement, El Centro
Date: February 23rd, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2768

Dear Chair Tarwater and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2768.

El Centro has served the communities of Wyandotte and Johnson Counties for nearly 50 years. Our mission is to strengthen communities and improve the lives of Latinos and others through educational, health, wealth, and advocacy opportunities. Central to this mission is reducing barriers that prevent individuals and families from securing and maintaining stable housing, which is essential to workforce participation and economic stability.

One of the services we provide at El Centro is emergency assistance. We help low-income families in emergency situations pay a partial or full amount of their rent to keep them housed and avoid eviction and homelessness. We pair this assistance with one-on-one budgeting and financial literacy education, to help move families from their emergency situation, towards financial stability, and then on their way to future financial goals.

While most landlords and property owners are happy to work with us, accepting our check payments and pledge letters, not all do. We have increasingly seen more companies decline our partial payment, stating the tenant needs to make only one, whole payment to pay their rent. Without that flexibility, it makes assisting families near impossible, as we cannot provide the funds directly to the family we are assisting. We have unfortunately seen some deny our assistance because of this policy, ultimately evicting families from their housing and perpetuating problems of homelessness in our communities.

We have also seen families struggle to find apartments that acknowledge all of their income sources when applying, especially child support and pensions of elderly clients. With many landlords setting already high expectations for income, like having to earn three-times the amount of rent to qualify, it is a challenge for families when not all income sources are counted.

House Bill 2768 addresses these issues and barriers in a practical and balanced way.

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By requiring landlords to accept multiple payments as long as rent is paid on time and in full, the bill helps prevent avoidable evictions that occur not because of nonpayment, but because systems cannot process how payment is made. This flexibility supports housing stability while preserving landlords' rights to collect rent and enforce lease terms.

Similarly, requiring landlords to consider all income sources when evaluating housing applications ensures that qualified applicants are not excluded due to rigid or automated screening practices. Veterans' benefits, disability income, child support, retirement income, and other lawful sources reflect a household's true ability to pay rent and should be considered accordingly.

For the communities El Centro serves, housing stability is foundational to economic participation. Stable housing supports consistent employment, reduces turnover, and strengthens local economies. Policies that remove unnecessary administrative barriers help ensure that Kansas workers can remain housed and engaged in the workforce.

House Bill 2768 does not lower standards or eliminate accountability. Instead, it aligns housing practices with the realities of today's workforce and economy, ensuring that people who are paying rent are not locked out of housing opportunities due to inflexible systems.

For these reasons, El Centro respectfully urges the Committee to support and advance House Bill 2768. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Gust
Vice President of Community Engagement
El Centro, Inc.