United Community Services
of Johnson County

In-Person Proponent Testimony to Senate Bill 415
Christina Ashie Guidry, Director of Policy & Planning, UCS

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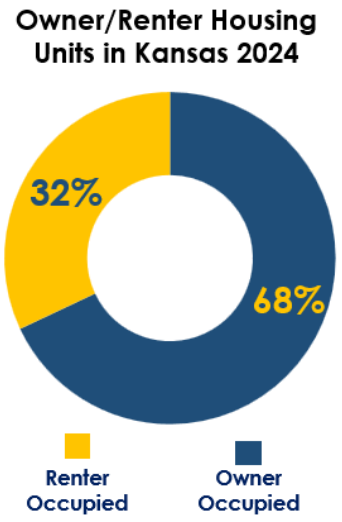
Dear Chair Warren and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Senate Bill 415, a common-sense measure that ensures when a landlord fails to maintain a rental home to the point that it becomes uninhabitable, renters, the district attorney, or Attorney General can use the protections already available under the Kansas Consumer Protection Act (KCPA).

At its core, SB 415 is about basic Kansas values: if you take someone's money, you deliver what you promised.



United Community Services of Johnson County works every day with local governments, service providers, and residents to understand what is really happening in our housing system. We use data, community voices, and collaboration to help Kansans not just survive—but stay housed and move forward.

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2024 estimates, nearly one in three Kansas households rents their home. For many families, rental housing is not a temporary stop—it is their long-term reality. Stable rental housing is the foundation for future homeownership, financial security, and community stability.

But our rental market has changed. More homes are now owned by large corporate investors. Research shows that these owners are more likely to defer maintenance, have more frequent code violations, and evict tenants at significantly higher rates than local "mom and pop" landlords who are invested in the community. When maintenance is ignored, entire neighborhoods feel the impact.**

The Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act, KRLTA, in K.S.A. 58-2553, requires landlords to provide safe, habitable housing; the problem is enforcement. When landlords fail to meet their obligation, renters often have no practical remedy. Renters, neighborhoods, and communities have seen the impact firsthand. In Gardner, 700 Kansans were forced to vacate Aspen Place Apartments with just 48 hours' notice after it was condemned as uninhabitable by the Fire Department. Similar situations have occurred in Topeka and Wichita.

Under the KRLTA, renters have little or no recourse against the landlord who violated their lease contract by failing to provide adequate housing: no immediate return of security deposit or of rent and no assistance in finding new housing. A 1979 Kansas Supreme Court case, *Chelsea Plaza Homes, Inc.* found that the KCPA does not apply to cases arising from the KRLTA.

Meanwhile, the landlords who repeatedly ignore code violations and fail to maintain properties, have little incentive to make repairs.

SB 415 is a balanced, common-sense solution. It does not create new regulations or burdens for responsible landlords. Rather, it ensures that existing consumer protection tools to apply when housing is so poorly maintained that it becomes uninhabitable to ensure landlords that defer maintenance have an incentive to comply with the KRLTA and to provide a remedy for renters if they do not.

Responsible landlords and communities benefit from this bill because it helps incentivize and ensure that housing is maintained and local property values remain stable for the neighborhood, mom and pop landlords, and the community.

For these reasons, United Community Services of Johnson County supports SB 415 and we respectfully urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

** Institutional owners of single-family housing are active in Kansas City, Mid-America Regional Council, Dec. 27, 2023; Buying the Block: The Impact of Corporate Owners on Tenants, and How to Promote Community Accountability, LISC, June 2025