KANSAS
HOLISTIC
DEFENDERS

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02/11/2026

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Kansas State Capitol

300 SW 10th Street

Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Proponent Testimony on SB415

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sam Allison-Natale; I'm the Executive Director of Kansas Holistic Defenders, a non-profit law firm representing poor and working class people in Douglas County facing eviction, with the support of private philanthropy and public grants. I'm writing in favor of Senate Bill 415, a common-sense market solution to the problem of ensuring habitable housing in Kansas.

In our work representing tenants in landlord-tenant cases, we've seen hundreds of instances of uninhabitable housing conditions. Unfortunately, the government in Lawrence has been largely ineffective in enforcing housing regulations, despite spending a considerable amount of taxpayer money, the problem continues. Though there are many tenants whose rights are being violated, usually by out-of-state corporate landlords, no private attorneys will take on these cases because there is no financial incentive to do so. As a result, the work is done almost entirely by non-profit organizations like ours, that will never have the capacity to serve everyone who deserves representation.

SB415 fixes the problem without expensive and ineffective government intervention. By extending Kansas's already-existing consumer protection laws to tenants with uninhabitable living conditions, SB415 opens up a private right of action for a jury to award tenants damages for properties where landlords are grossly violating acceptable housing conditions. The Kansas Consumer Protection Act also allows judges and juries to award attorneys fees, meaning that private attorneys would have a financial incentive to take on these cases where the claims have a strong chance of success.

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SB415 is a free-market solution that gives private attorneys the incentive they need to bring consumer protection cases for tenants. As a result of this bill passing, the cost of providing attorneys to tenants can be shifted away from taxpayers, and on to the segment of bad-apple landlords who a jury has found to have violated the law. With more private attorneys being incentivized to bring these lawsuits, landlords will have a financial incentive to comply with housing laws and give their tenants fair treatment.

Furthermore, because attorneys only get paid when they win, they only have an incentive to take on cases that have real claims, not frivolous ones. SB415 would bring Kansas in line with the majority of the States who extend consumer protections to the landlord-tenant context, and have seen private enforcement of safe housing conditions much more often than we see in Kansas.

Kansans deserve access to justice, and with SB415, the already-existing market of private attorneys can fill that need, improving the condition of housing for everyone who rents.

Sincerely,

Sam Allison-Natale
Executive Director