

**Welfare Reform Committee**  
**HB 2430**  
**March 2, 2023, at 1:30 PM**  
**Topeka State Capitol, Room 152-S**

**Testimony submitted by Heather Bradley-Geary**  
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I am testifying before you as a Kansas Voter, a Social Worker of 20 years in the permanent housing field, a supportive housing developer, and most importantly an advocate. I am speaking to oppose the passage of House Bill 2430.

For the last nine years, I have developed 26 supportive housing communities in 9 states, ending homelessness for 750 households on an annual basis. Under this HOUSING FIRST model, 95% of our households (713) have remained permanently housed. Permanent housing provides a permanent unit for folks without an address and provides the necessary services to keep that person housed. It is research based and I can attest from the last nine years of data, that it works.

If House Bill 2430 were to pass, our state would be putting, yet another obstacle up for our neighbors who are unhoused. There are many obstacles to housing, one of those is any kind of criminal history, therefore, criminalizing our unhoused neighbors, would be counterintuitive. If permanent housing is the goal for Kansas citizens, then House Bill 2430 goes against this goal, keeping folks out of housing.

In the State of Kansas, 2,449 persons are homeless every night, this is a SOLVABLE issue. I believe that ending homelessness is the right thing to do and I hope that you as elected officials, can also agree that ending homelessness is the right thing to do. However, if you don't believe it is the right thing to do, it is the fiscally responsible thing to do. In research gathered by Vecino Group and Corporation for Supportive Housing in Kansas City, it was determined that it costs the general public \$153 per day to keep someone homeless. If we are to permanently house someone, it costs the general public \$43 per day. You are literally saving \$110 per day/per person when you vote to house folks instead of criminalizing them for existing. In Kansas, this equals a savings of \$98.3 million annually.

Without an address, nothing else can exist, you cannot gain employment without an address, you cannot gain a photo ID without an address, you cannot gain a Social Security card without an address, you simply cannot exist in our country without an address. Please join me in opposing House Bill 2430 and help us provide a permanent address for all Kansas residents, so our neighbors can exist and be seen, not criminalized for simply existing.