

Testimony of Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health  
To House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development  
Opponent Written Testimony for HB 2119 | February 6, 2025

Chairman Tarwater, Vice Chair Turk, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written, opponent testimony on HB 2119, which would eliminate the Affordable Housing Tax Credit. Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health (LDCPH) serves Lawrence and Douglas County residents and works to create abundant and equitable opportunities for good health. The private market has fallen short; Kansas has been underbuilding housing since 2007<sup>i</sup>. Like other Midwest states, Kansas should maintain the new Affordable Tax Credit Act, which provides the state match for federal low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC).

The AHTC is the primary driver of public-private partnerships in building housing for residents of Lawrence and Douglas County at 30%-80% median income. Without this incentive, local builders and developers have testified that affordable housing would not be built, and our community will continue to see housing costs increase, housing insecurity, and economic struggles rather than economic growth. According to recent data from the Lawrence Homebuilders Association, construction of single-family homes declined in 2024 to about 57 permits granted by the City of Lawrence due to the rising costs of construction.<sup>ii</sup>

Affordable housing is an also a key pillar of our 2024-2029 Community Health Improvement Plan through the A Place for Everyone Plan, which is a comprehensive strategic plan undertaken by the county and the city to resolve homelessness through a shared vision of resources and equity across agencies. A key part of the A Place for Everyone Plan is conducting a housing study that reviews housing availability and affordability in Lawrence and Douglas County and providing more affordable housing to residents of both the city and county. Without the match, the likelihood of more affordable housing diminishes significantly, which can lead to an increase in homelessness and unsafe housing in an already burdened area.<sup>iii</sup>

We encourage you to consider the ramifications of eliminating the state match for LIHTC projects. Thank you for taking our objections into consideration.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Smith, MPH  
Executive Director  
Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health

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<sup>i</sup> *Housing production in the Kansas City region continues to lag peer metros* | MARC.

(n.d.). <https://marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>

<sup>ii</sup> *Single-family home construction in Lawrence continues to decline as home prices rise*. (2025, January 24). The Lawrence Times. <https://lawrencekstimes.com/2025/01/24/home-construction-down-prices-rise/>

<sup>iii</sup> Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health. (2024). 2024-2029 Community Health Improvement Plan. In *Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health*. Retrieved February 4, 2025, from <https://ldchealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/5485/2024-2029-Community-Health-Improvement-Plan>



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