Written-Only Opponent Testimony to House Bill 2119
Lea Roselyn, Affordable Housing Administrator

February 2, 2025
Lea Roselyn, Affordable Housing Administrator
City of Lawrence
PO Box 708
Lawrence, KS 66044

Planning & Development Services

PO Box 708
Lawrence, KS 66044

P: 785-832-7700
lawrenceks.org

Dear Chair Tarwater and Members of the House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 2119. The City of Lawrence creates a community where all enjoy life and feel at home. We envision a community where all people in Lawrence live in safe, functional, and aesthetically unique neighborhoods that provide opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles with access to safe and affordable housing and essential services that help them thrive.

Like other areas of Kansas, Lawrence is experiencing a housing shortage, particularly for residents earning less than $50,000 a year. In Lawrence, over half of renters and almost 20% of homeowners are housing-cost burdened. With housing prices steadily increasing more than wages, more Lawrence households are unable to pay for essentials like food, utilities, and healthcare, on top of rising housing costs. Structural issues in housing finance and construction have led to slow construction, which has increased housing prices for both owners and renters. Compounding this issue is that it is extremely difficult to provide new housing at affordable prices.

Housing that is affordable to and supports our local workforce requires public-private partnerships to develop. The Affordable Housing Tax Credit (AHTC) is that public-private partnership. The AHTC provides a match to the federal low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC), brings new income, jobs, and revenue to local communities. Today, the AHTC is making strides in reducing Kansas' housing shortage, including Lawrence.

We oppose House Bill 2119 which would eliminate the AHTC and result in even higher housing costs and greater housing insecurity.