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**Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Opposition to HB 2504**, An act concerning housing; relating to landlords and tenants.

House Committee on Federal and State Affairs, Rep. Tom Kessler, Chair - February 5, 2026

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I serve as Executive Director for Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multifaith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” on a variety of important social and economic justice issues. We work with many of the mainline denominations in Kansas, including the local judicatories of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the United Methodist Church (UMC), and with hundreds of congregations and thousands of people of faith in Kansas. I rise today in opposition to HB 2504.

The proposed legislation to strip cities and counties of their ability to enact source-of-income protections is not a neutral policy of “landlord choice,” but rather a tool that facilitates the systematic exclusion of our most vulnerable neighbors. By legally sanctioning the rejection of tenants simply because they pay with Housing Choice Vouchers, Social Security, or disability benefits, this bill effectively encodes a “No Poor People Allowed” sign into state law. For many Kansas families, a voucher is a lifeline—the difference between a stable home and the trauma of homelessness. To permit the blanket rejection of these lawful funds is to tell the elderly and families with children that their participation in our community is conditional on the approval of a private business owner, regardless of their ability to pay the full rent.

KIFA is a member of Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN), a coalition that focuses on preventing homelessness with a three-pronged approach: increasing our stock of affordable housing; helping support people in danger of losing their homes; and returning those who are homeless to housing through a Housing First approach. This bill falls into the second category: disallowing source-of-income discrimination would be an important step in making housing for vulnerable families more stable. In fact, one of KHAN’s priorities this year is a bill to prevent “source of income” discrimination by landlords, the very thing this bill is intended to prevent. We would prefer the state to develop policy on that, but in the absence of that, we want to maintain the right of municipalities to protect their residents by taking some of these measures on their own.

Point blank: this bill discriminates against poor folks who cannot afford to own property. One critical program targeted by this bill is the federally funded Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). I point you to Kansas Housing Advocacy Network’s 2026 priorities:

HCVs provide low-income households with rental assistance, which helps stabilize households who otherwise could not afford housing. HCVs in Kansas are not fully utilized because landlords or management companies will not accept them. Dodge City, for example, is only able to use one-third of its vouchers. Other states, like Oklahoma, North Dakota, and Utah support full utilization of housing choice vouchers (HCV) by prohibiting discrimination against vouchers. Other communities, like Wyandotte County, fund landlord incentive and risk mitigation funds to ensure their vouchers are fully used.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN), [2026 Policy Priorities](#)

**KIFA - HB 2504 - Opponent - p. 2**

This bill also has the same problems as other preemption bills that KIFA has testified against in the past: It is very difficult in the Kansas legislature to develop policy, or even to have a conversation about, economic justice issues. When Kansas citizens do the hard work of organizing themselves to convince their municipalities to address these issues, industry groups – in this case, realtors – run to the legislature to preempt it. It's anti-democratic as well as cruel to poor people.

Furthermore, this bill serves no legitimate public purpose other than to legally preclude any regulation of rental housing. Prohibiting local governments from protecting their residents' right to housing is a direct assault on local control and the moral health of our communities. It traps voucher holders in neighborhoods with substandard housing and limited opportunity, perpetuating cycles of poverty and racial segregation.

As an organization dedicated to bringing a moral voice to public policy, we believe that every human being deserves the dignity of a roof over their head. This legislation, by contrast, prioritizes the convenience of property owners over the fundamental human need for shelter, leaving Kansas renters exposed to arbitrary bias without any hope of local recourse. I urge you to vote NO on SB 2504.

Thank you.