



United Community Services of Johnson County

In-Person Proponent Testimony to House Bill 2357 Christina Ashie Guidry, Director of Policy & Planning, UCS

Date: February 10th, 2025
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Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Bill 2357 which would encourage eviction mediation and provide for sealing of eviction filings and expungement of satisfied eviction judgments**. United Community Services is a nonprofit that provides data analysis, leads collaborative planning, and mobilizes resources to support the success of our community's most vital resource – its people.

Kansas sees an average of 14,560 eviction filings each year.* Evictions have far-reaching effects on communities— creating financial losses for Kansas property owners, straining judicial and law enforcement resources, heightening demand for public assistance, and destabilizing workplaces and local economies. An eviction filing stays on record permanently and can make tenants ineligible for housing, leading to housing instability and homelessness for Kansas families. Lack of stable housing creates longstanding ripple effects for households such as intense stress, loss of employment, poor health, and poor educational outcomes. Those ripples then extend to the community: employers, schools, family members, social services. **HB 2357 provides clear steps to reduce unintended consequences of evictions, promotes mediation, and support thriving, healthy communities.**

[Evictions are on the rise](#), due in part to our [housing crisis](#). 2023 American Community Survey data (ACS) shows that 43% of Kansas renters are housing-cost burdened, or paying more than 30% of gross income on housing. The “housing cost-burden” marker indicates that more Kansans are struggling to pay for monthly essentials like food, transportation, and medicine and our rate of homelessness has risen.

Kansas courts strongly encourage mediation in civil small claims cases because mediation helps both sides reach the best outcome, and mediation reduces the caseload of judges. Evictions are small claims cases that yield the same benefits as other small claims cases when referred to mediation. Currently, the 10th District (Johnson County) has a mandatory eviction mediation program and the 18th District (Sedgwick County) and 7th District (Douglas County) have voluntary eviction diversion and mediation cases. The 10th District's program has been extremely successful: over 90% of participating property owners and tenants reach an agreement in mediation, with over 70% of tenants fulfilling that agreement and the case being dismissed. The results are reduced costs for property owners, greater stability for tenants and the community, and reduced costs and risk for law enforcement.

In addition to mediation, eviction sealing and expungement are essential in Kansas. An eviction filing, even if inaccurate or dismissed, creates a presumption of ineligibility for housing. [How?](#) Routinely, [tenant screening agencies](#) collect this data to generate “risk scores,” which property managers use to deny applications or impose worse conditions for tenants. With most applications now online, tenants often have no way to explain their situation.

*Initial Report, Kansas Supreme Court's Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for Eviction Proceedings, April 20, 2022, pg. 11.

Property owners and management companies need access to fair and accurate tenant evaluations. Sealing evictions until a judgment ensures only valid cases affect tenants, preventing harm from dismissed or erroneous filings. Since eviction cases move quickly—just a few weeks from initial filing to judgement—sealing cases that don't progress protects tenants from unfair consequences. Expunging evictions after two years and a satisfied judgment ensures records reflect recent history. Despite good behavior, past evictions still create barriers due to tenant screening practices, making housing access difficult even for responsible tenants.

Under **House Bill 2357** evictions that result in unsatisfied judgments, recent judgments (within two years), and repeat judgments will be in the public view - for tenant credit reporting agencies and property owners to see and use in evaluating tenants. As a result, property owners and management companies will have accurate tools to evaluate tenants: tenant applications, references, credit reports, and eviction judgments. In turn, tenants will be better able to access housing and to remain stably housed and fully engaged in work, school, health and the community.

UCS strongly supports House Bill 2357, which takes common-sense steps to reduce unintended consequences of evictions, promotes mediation in civil cases, and supports community health.