

**Testimony by Charlie Hunt with the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE)
to House Committee on Taxation
Written Proponent for HB 2074 – February 6, 2024**

Chair Turner and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 2074, a bill which would restore renters to eligible claimants for the Homestead Property Tax refund act. Johnson County Department of Health and Environment's mission is to promote and protect the health and environment for all who live, work, and play in our community. Being able to establish and maintain stable housing is foundational to the health and well-being of local community members. While increasing housing costs impact many households across the state of Kansas, maintaining stable housing is especially difficult for our residents who are on fixed incomes due to factors such as advanced age, disability, or veteran status.

- Renters in Kansas are more than twice as likely as homeowners to be cost-burdened (i.e., pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs). Dedicating such a large portion of one's income to housing costs leaves many Kansans unable to regularly meet other basic needs such as food, medicine, and transportation. Ultimately not meeting one's housing costs can lead to the loss of housing altogether.
- Those who have limited income are especially vulnerable to rising rent costs, which increased by 31% between 2018 and 2023 in Kansas.
- More than two of five Kansas households who rent are cost-burdened – increasing the likelihood of their housing instability.
- About 70% of Kansans who completed the Docking Institute's Kansas Speaks Survey in 2023 agreed or strongly agreed that they were concerned about the cost of housing in their communities. Including vulnerable renters in the Homestead Property Tax refund act will address some of those concerns.

Stable attainable housing options are a foundation for our community's current and future well-being. Having stable housing enables households to maintain employment and regular income, keep children and youth in school, build strong social networks, and stabilizes neighborhoods. The extension of the Homestead Property Tax refund act to vulnerable renters in Kansas will support their ability to sustain stable housing – and in turn their well-being.

Because of these reasons and concerns, the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment asks that the committee recommend HB 2074 favorably for passage.

Sincerely

Charlie Hunt, Director
Johnson County Department of Health & Environment



https://www.fhsu.edu/docking/Kansas-Speaks/2023-kansas-speaks-report-final-revised-10_30_23.pdf
[DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics - Census Bureau Table](#) 2023 ACS 5 yr estimates Kansas