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Janel Bowers

February 15, 2024

Representative Adam Smith, Chair
House Committee on Taxation
State of Kansas

RE House Bill 2685- Proponent Comments

Dear Representative Smith and all members of the House Committee on Taxation,

Friends of JCDS (FOJCDS) is respectfully offering support of House Bill 2685, amending K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 79-3606 and repealing the existing section which would provide exemption for registered charitable organizations.

We commend your forethought and efforts to address this issue. For years the Kansas Legislature's time and efforts have been taken up with hearing and reviewing each individual request for exemption. Additionally, your work on this bill supports the work of charitable organizations throughout Kansas, supporting a healthier, greater and better Kansas. As a native Kansan I personally thank you. As a nonprofit, we applaud you.

For FOJCDS it means supporting affordable and accessible housing in Johnson County, KS. Many of you have championed the issue of affordability for Kansans and this bill would help to address the poverty of access that so many face in our current housing market.

At its heart, FOJCDS, Inc. is about helping individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) achieve success in the community, whether it's providing accessible and affordable housing or helping with basic needs. As a stand-alone charitable organization that creates affordable and accessible housing, your bill will support more housing, and greater efforts to improve the lives of individuals with IDD living in our community.

The individuals we serve struggle to find affordable and accessible housing. Can you imagine being in a wheelchair or using a walker? What would go through your mind when looking for somewhere to live? *Is the house one level? Is there a ramp? Will my wheelchair fit down that hallway??? Can I use the bathroom? Is the rent affordable? Can I use my housing voucher? And, **are my neighbors going to like me? It's that lack of access to things you and I don't think twice about.***

But your support of HB 2685 can help be the "YES" to these needs.

There was a legislator that once said, "You can't roll up your sleeves and wring your hands at the same time."

Thank you for rolling up your sleeves.

Respectfully,

Janel Bowers, MA, Chief Executive Officer
Friends of JCDS, Inc
10501 Lackman Road
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