



**Overland
Park
Chamber™**

**To: Representative Nick Hoheisel and Members of the House Committee on
Financial Institutions and Pensions**

**From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce**

Date: 15 March 2023

Representative Hoheisel and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 34.

Housing affordability has become a major topic of conversation among our members. As our employer community struggles to fill job vacancies, it is important that we look at every possible strategy to assist them in fulfilling their employment needs. One component of filling job vacancies is the availability of affordable housing for employees and their families.

While affordable is a relative term based on one's income there is no doubt that being able to afford a home in Johnson County is becoming increasingly difficult. The Kansas City Regional Association of Realtors indicated that the average price of a home in Johnson County was nearly \$485,000. It is particularly difficult to find reasonable housing on the lower end of that scale. We think the provisions of SB 34 will help.

In 2021 the Johnson County Community Housing Study was completed and offered clear guidance for each city in Johnson County. For Overland Park, the study revealed many needs, but most relevant to this bill was the need for approximately 4,6333 additional owner-occupied units priced below \$250,000 (in 2018 dollars).

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Housing affordability is a real issue and creative solutions are necessary to assist in meeting the needs of our growing community. The Housing Study analysis noted above is not unique to Overland Park. Throughout Johnson County the needs are similar.

While not a cure-all, we believe the provisions of SB 34 allow additional cities, like Overland Park, to utilize a tool that will support the goal of creating more affordable housing. We encourage the Committee to give careful consideration to this bill and advance it for further action.