

**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
KANSAS  
**Developmental Supports**

10501 Lackman Road  
Lenexa, Kansas 66219

TO: Representative Steve Johnson, House Taxation Committee and Members of the Committee  
DATE: March 5, 2018  
FROM: Sarah Schlitter, Director of Residential Services, Johnson County Developmental Supports  
RE: In Support of Friends of JCDS Tax Exemption Request (HB-2593) Written Testimony Only

Friends of JCDS, Inc. has been a tremendous help to individuals in Johnson County with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Friends' housing program has ensured that individuals with mobility issues (requiring wheelchairs, walkers, and other assistive devices) are able to secure housing that meets their physical needs as well as their stringent budget requirements.

Johnson County Developmental Supports provides residential services (direct care) to 123 individuals with IDD who on average have a monthly income of \$1,108. It is very difficult for them to find housing that is affordable, and even more difficult for them to find housing that meets accessibility needs. Many of our individuals spend more than 50% of their income on housing, leaving very little for other basic needs, such as food, clothing, utilities, or medicine.

Friends has worked to provide housing that meets affordable housing standards (approximately 30% of income) and also meets universal design or barrier free housing standards. This means homes have ramps, accessible bathrooms and ceiling lifts to help with transfers.

Friends has recently acquired additional funding to increase accessibility in all 12 of their homes. This will help not only the individuals that live in the homes now, and in the future, but also the staff that help with personal care needs. The addition of ceiling lifts in homes will ensure that transfers from bed to wheel chair or bed to bathroom are completed in a safe manner, reducing risk and injury to both staff and persons served. The addition of ramps to secondary exits to homes adds an additional level of safety to homes.

Should sales tax exemption be grants, individuals served will have greater access in their own homes and additional accessibility features can be added to enhance quality of life.

Sincerely yours,



Sarah Schlitter  
Director of Residential Services, Johnson County Developmental Supports