

January 26, 2017

Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections and Local Government

To: Senator Steve Fitzgerald, Chair

Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau
Senator David Haley
Senator Mary Pilcher-Cook
Senator Dinah Sykes

Senator John Doll
Senator Randall Hardy
Senator John Skubal

Fr: Marc Galbraith
1230 College, Topeka, KS 66604

Re: SB 31

Mr. Chairman, Committee members, my name is Marc Galbraith. I live here in Topeka, not far from the Capital building, at 1230 College, in what is known as the Elmhurst neighborhood. I am the current president of the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association and I also serve as chair of the Code Compliance Committee of the Topeka Neighborhood Task Force.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak with you this morning. My remarks are brief. I really just wanted to say that I support this legislation. I also think that many of the people I work with regarding neighborhood issues would also say they think this is a good thing and something we need.

Those same people know what it means to have an abandoned property in the neighborhood. Many of them have lived with that situation. And many of us saw an increase of such properties beginning about 2009 or 2010.

It doesn't take long to see the consequences of a house left unoccupied. The impact of that can be significant for someone who lives next door or on the same block or neighborhood. Yet it seemed often that nothing could be done to change the situation.

This legislation offers real hope. Not only does it mean such properties would actually again be in the hands of someone who's responsible for them, but that the property would also be rehabilitated, put to a good use and perhaps even put back on the tax roles. All of those are good things.

Nobody wants to see someone lose their property if they have any intentions of occupying it again and bringing it back to a state that meets city codes. And it appears

to me that this legislation provides real safeguards that acknowledges that fact and hopefully would prevent that from happening.

I hope you will support this legislation.