



Testimony

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Abandoned and Blighted Housing HB 2314

Delivered February 22, 2019
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City strongly supports legislation which streamlines and expedites the process for local governments, neighborhood organizations and private businesses to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance and foreclosed properties to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners. The City of Kansas City is making the revitalization of neighborhoods a top priority.

Abandoned homes and vacant lots, most with code violations, are creating blight and depressing home values for neighbors. Many of the abandoned properties which are creating blight sit empty for so long, they become unsalvageable and can not be rehabilitated and returned as useful housing. The goal is to save these homes and return them to the market as properties which can again be lived in. That will help citizens, neighborhoods and the city at-large.

A recurring discussion around this issue is property rights. I would ask you to think about the property rights of the neighboring homeowners who have to live next door to one of these abandoned decaying properties. And another reminder: this legislation only deals with abandoned properties where no owner can be found.

The Unified Government has launched an ambitious program to make improvements to 10,000 properties in the next five years. The goal is to reduce the number of abandoned and vacant housing stock from 3,491 to 1,900 by the year 2021. This legislation will be an important tool in meeting this goal.

This legislation is the result of many years of discussions, compromises and revisions. This very legislation passed the House and Senate in 2016, but was unfortunately vetoed by the Governor. We urge you to again approve it.