



**PO Box 654  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
KansasInterfaithAction.org  
Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director  
Rev. Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Board Chair**

## Written Testimony in Support of SB 150 Senate Judiciary Committee, Rep. Rick Wilborn, chair March 6, 2019

Mr. Chair, members of the committee: My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Kansas Interfaith Action, the organization of which I am executive director. KIFA is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social and economic justice issues.

We testify in support of Senate Bill 150 because violence is a widespread problem in society, a violation of the sanctity of the human being; domestic violence is an additional violation of the bonds of trust and love between partners. As people of faith, we are called to witness to the brokenness of the world, and to do what we can to repair these wounds, by enabling victims to survive, and to move on to a better future.

There are several cases we are aware of where lease agreements prevented the victim of domestic violence to move to safety or to make a new beginning:

- In one case, the apartment complex offered the woman three options: keep the apartment, move to a different apartment in the same complex (where her abuser would know where she was and when she was there), or break the lease, but only if her partner (the abuser) would sign off -- giving him veto power over her future.
- In another case the landlord gave a woman the option of taking a smaller apartment in the complex, but at the same amount of rent.
- And in the third case, there had been multiple police interactions, so when the survivor went to rent another apartment her background check tagged her as a “troublemaker.”

SB 150 would address each of these cases, by making it illegal to keep a DV survivor from breaking her lease, or from renting another apartment, based solely on the history of domestic violence. It would require attestation of the circumstances of the case, which would give the landlord protection against false claims. Many states already have these kinds of laws; Kansas does not.

We often ask, in cases of domestic violence, why don’t the victims leave? Here we find situations where survivors are punished financially for leaving, or where they find it impossible to leave due to the conditions of their lease, or where they are prevented from entering into a new lease.

A law already on the books in other states could make it easier for a survivor of domestic violence to leave her situation, move to safer quarters, and start her life anew. As people of faith we know that every life is precious; if this bill saved one life, or allowed one person to escape a dangerous situation, and to survive and thrive, it would be worth it. We believe that SB 150 will do that, and that's why we urge this committee to pass it favorably on to the full Senate.

Thank you for your attention.