



# PUTTING KANSANS FIRST IN HOUSING

## Building Stability through the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA)

The Kansas rental market has shifted from a “mom and pop” market invested in local community success to a corporate, private equity market<sup>1</sup> focused on profit. The Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA) assumes good faith on the part of landlords, but provides no real tools for renters, cities, or the Attorney General to ensure the safe, habitable housing it guarantees.

**The result?** Corporate owners can—and do—buy up single family neighborhoods<sup>2</sup>, townhomes, and apartments and significantly increase rent, **evict 3.7 times more often** than local owners, and are **cited for code violations 1.6 times more often**<sup>3</sup>. They push “mom and pops” out of the market and prevent Kansas families from becoming homeowners. Cities across the state—Topeka, Wichita, Gardner, Kansas City—are left with growing stocks of poorly maintained rental housing and few options to protect their residents. Without action, more tragic situations like Aspen Place<sup>4</sup>, Timberlee<sup>5</sup>, Hillsdale<sup>6</sup> and Emery Gardens<sup>7</sup> will threaten neighborhood safety, family stability, and local property values.

### Why It Matters:

**Kansas homes should work for Kansans**, not favor out-of-state corporations. Kansans deserve transparency and tools to ensure they get the safe, habitable housing guaranteed under the law. Transparency in costs and clearer accountability protects families' health and safety, keeps neighborhoods stable, preserves property values, and reduces taxpayer costs for public safety.

*Sponsoring legislators for these bills: Sen. Dinah Sykes and Representative Rui Xu*

# 1: NO HIDDEN COSTS, NO UNSAFE HOMES

## NO HIDDEN FEES: CLEAR RENTAL COSTS, 5-DAY GRACE PERIOD, AND 5% LATE FEE CAP

*Require all fees: fixed (like parking, trash, internet, pet rent) and usage-based (like water, sewer, gas) be disclosed in the lease agreement. Establish a 5-day grace period before late fees apply and cap late fees at 5%.*

The KRLTA does not require landlords to disclose all fees or provide an estimate of total housing costs. **Large corporate owners often advertise rent prices that exclude mandatory charges** like trash, pest treatment, or package handling, that can add hundreds of dollars a month. The Federal Trade Commission has sued Greystar, the nation's largest property management company for deceiving renters about the true cost of housing through hidden "junk fees."<sup>8</sup>

Kansas law does not limit late fees or offer a grace period. In August 2025, the Kansas Supreme Court upheld \$21,240 in late fees on a Prairie Village rental home where just \$5,700 in rent was owed.<sup>9</sup>

Transparent pricing and reasonable late fee limits protects Kansas renters from predatory practices, helps families budget with confidence, and promotes stable, thriving communities.

## CLARIFY THAT THE KANSAS CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT (KCPA) APPLIES TO THE KANSAS RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT ACT (KRLTA)

*Make clear that the KCPA, K.S.A. 50-636, applies to cases arising from the KRLTA. A court case from 1979, Chelsea Plaza Homes, Inc. says that it does not. The KCPA allows for civil penalties of up to \$10,000 (\$20,000 for veterans and other protected groups) and attorney's fees.*

**The KRLTA currently assumes compliance but offers no real tools to act when landlords fail to provide safe housing.** Renters can't recover attorney fees and are typically limited to actual damages, making enforcement unrealistic.

## CLARIFY THAT THE KCPA APPLIES TO THE KRLTA (CONTINUED)

Aligning the KRLTA with the KCPA, which applies in other consumer cases, ensures Kansans can hire an attorney, gives the Attorney General or district attorney jurisdiction, and relieves cities from the unfunded mandate of being sole enforcers. This is consistent with Kansas values of fairness, and personal responsibility.

## CLARIFY AUTHORITY FOR RENTAL INSPECTIONS

*Clarify K.S.A. 12,16-138 to allow cities to perform an interior inspections with tenant consent, with an administrative warrant, or with reasonable notice and where there is probable cause that imminent danger related to health and safety exists in the building or premises.*

Cities lack clarity on their authority to inspect rentals and address code violations and unsafe conditions. **Renters fear retaliation, eviction or rent hikes, if they request or allow an inspection.** Under current law, if a tenant moves or is forced out, the city loses its ability to require needed repairs, leaving dangerous conditions uncorrected.<sup>10</sup> Fixing this gap in the law will provide clarity to cities and protect the health and safety of Kansans.

## EMPOWER CITIES TO ADDRESS UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS

*Amend K.S.A. 12, 1617e to extend existing city authority - currently limited to exterior nuisances like overgrown vegetation or trash - to include interior health and safety code violations in non-owner occupied residential rental housing.*

Right now, cities can cite landlords but often lack the tools to enforce repairs. **Large corporate owners sometimes choose to pay small fines rather than fix serious problems, leaving Kansans in unsafe homes.**<sup>10</sup> Allowing cities to correct interior violations when landlords refuse to act is a practical way to protect tenants, preserve property values, and strengthen neighborhood stability.

## 2: FAIR EVICTIONS, STABLE HOMES

### ENSURE FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE IN EVICTION PROCEEDINGS

Require landlords filing for eviction to submit two copies of the lease, all notices to the tenant, evidence of the amount owed, and a complete payment history. Courts will provide these materials to tenants along with the summons and answer and counterclaim forms. Courts need discretion to allow continuances when necessary to ensure fairness.

Kansas has one of the fastest eviction processes in the nation - sometimes just a week from filing to judgment.<sup>11</sup> **Renters often never see the evidence against them and courts lack complete records to make just decisions.** By requiring documentation upfront and allowing judges flexibility to ensure due process, Kansas can prevent wrongful evictions, reduce court errors, and protect the basic fairness every Kansan deserves.

### PROTECT STABLE TENANCY AND PREVENT UNJUST DISPLACEMENT

Require landlords to provide notice and a valid reason, such as: major renovations, sale of property, or inheritance transfer, before evicting or choosing not to renew a lease. Landlords would retain full authority to evict for cause, including nonpayment of rent or lease violations.

Today, **renters in good standing can lose their homes without explanation, forcing them into sudden moves and unexpected costs for deposits, fees, and relocation.** These disruptions destabilize families and communities - and in some cases, push Kansans into homelessness.<sup>12</sup> Setting clear standards for nonrenewal protects responsible tenants while preserving landlords' rights, promoting housing stability, and strengthening communities across Kansas.

## 3: KEEP KANSAS HOMES IN KANSAS HANDS

### LIMIT CORPORATE OWNERSHIP TO PROTECT KANSAS HOMEOWNERSHIP

Cap corporate ownership of single family rental homes at 20 homes statewide.

Large investors are buying entire neighborhoods, converting them into rentals, and outbidding Kansas families and mom and pop landlords. **More than 1 in 4 single-family homes is now purchased by a corporate owner, driving up rents, increasing evictions, and reducing local homeownership opportunities.**<sup>2</sup> Setting reasonable limits on corporate ownerships helps to keep homes within reach for Kansas families, supports mom and pop landlords, and preserves the stability and character of our neighborhoods.

### KANSANS BECOMING HOMEOWNERS

Give renters, eligible nonprofits, public development corporations, and public housing authorities the opportunity to purchase small residential rental properties (four units or fewer) when they are sold. Properties would carry short-term deed restrictions requiring owner occupancy or income-based housing for at least two years.

Kansas faces a serious shortage of workforce housing,<sup>13</sup> much of which is being sold to corporate investors or flipped into luxury housing. Providing local buyers and housing organizations a chance to purchase these homes before corporations helps preserve affordability, supports homeownership, and keeps working Kansans rooted in their communities.

**Learn more at the Kansas Public Policy Forum on 11/12 from 9-11:30 in Overland Park where sponsoring legislators will discuss these proposals. For questions, contact:**

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Alex Viega, "Investors snap up growing share of US homes as traditional buyers struggle to afford one," AP, July 8, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/real-estate-investors-home-sales-affordability-housing-7aa2bc78c87bfb1f292fe4321fe658cb>.
- <sup>2</sup>"Investor Impact on Single-Family Housing in the KC Region: Rental property ownership is shifting away from individual ownership toward more ownership by investors", Mid-America Regional Council, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f34cd200c4894e20a2e88f08d77dc792/>.
- <sup>3</sup>USC KC, "New Report Links Corporate Ownership of Rentals in Kansas City Area to More Evictions and Code Violations", May 27, 2025, <https://lisc.org/kansas-city/regional-stories/new-report-links-corporate-ownership-rentals-kansas-city-area-more-evictions-and-code-violations/>.
- <sup>4</sup>Jonathan Ketz, "700 residents impacted by Aspen Place Condemnation in Gardner, Kansas", Fox4, May 7, 2025, <https://fox4kc.com/news/700-residents-impacted-by-aspen-place-condemnation-in-gardner-kansas/>.
- <sup>5</sup>Matthew Self, "Condemned east Topeka apartment cited for trash, vehicle violations", KSNT, April 16, 2025, <https://ksnt.com/news/local-news/condemned-east-topeka-apartment-cited-for-trash-vehicle-violations/>.
- <sup>6</sup>"Residents stop paying rent over maintenance issues at Topeka apartments", KSNT, July 8, 2021, <https://ksnt.com/news/local-news/topeka-apartment-complex-residents-stop-paying-rent-over-maintenance-issues/>.
- <sup>7</sup>Jocelyn Schifferdecker, "Tenants dealing with 'unlivable conditions' at Emery Gardens," KAKE, March 26, 2024, updated Nov. 22, 2024, [https://kake.com/unlivable/tenants-dealing-with-unlivable-conditions-at-emery-gardens/article\\_0617370e-c26e-590f-b876-b417857fa37a.html](https://kake.com/unlivable/tenants-dealing-with-unlivable-conditions-at-emery-gardens/article_0617370e-c26e-590f-b876-b417857fa37a.html).
- <sup>8</sup>FTC, State of Colorado Take Action Against Greystar, Nation's Largest Multi-Family Rental Property Manager, For Deceiving Consumers About Rent Prices. FTC.gov. Jan. 16, 2025. <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/01/ftc-state-colorado-take-action-against-greystar-nations-largest-multi-family-rental-property-manager>.
- <sup>9</sup>Morgan Chilson, "Prairie Village woman owes landlord \$21,000 in late fees, Kansas Supreme Court rules," Kansas Reflector, Aug. 2, 2025, <https://www.kcur.org/housing-development-section/2025-08-02/prairie-village-landlord-late-fees-kansas-supreme-court>.
- <sup>10</sup>Celia Hack, "The city of Wichita can fine landlords who don't take care of their properties. It rarely does," KMWU, April 2, 2025, <https://kmuw.org/2025-04-02/wichita-can-fine-landlords-who-dont-take-care-of-their-properties-it-rarely-does>.
- <sup>11</sup>Michael Scott Davidson, "In the past five years, roughly three-in-10 Las Vegas Valley renter households have faced a court-ordered eviction," Las Vegas Review-Journal, June 29, 2019, <https://reviewjournal.com/local/local-nevada/despite-changes-nevada-eviction-law-still-favors-landlords-1697301/>.
- <sup>12</sup>"Homelessness in Johnson County: 2025 PIT Snapshot", United Community Services of Johnson County, April 2025, <https://ucsjoco.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2025-Homelessness-Factsheet-PIT-Preliminary.pdf>.
- <sup>13</sup>"2025 Kansas Housing Profile", National Low Income Housing Coalition, March 2025, [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP\\_KS.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_KS.pdf).

**Updated 10/25/25**

