



KANSAS HOMES, KANSAS VALUES

Ensuring Safe Homes, Strong Neighborhoods under 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 market¹ focused on the bottom line. 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 neighborhoods², 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**³. 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 Place⁴, Timberlee⁵, Hillsdale⁶ and Emery Gardens⁷ will threaten neighborhood safety, family stability, and local property values.

Why It Matters: Kansans believe in getting what you pay for, and families should get the safe, habitable housing the law guarantees when they sign a lease. Just as landlords screen their renters, Kansans deserve transparency about the landlords they trust with the places they call home. Good landlords keep our neighborhoods strong. 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. Doug Shane, Rep. Leah Howell, and Rep. Cyndi Howerton

1: ENSURING SAFE, HEALTHY HOMES

ESTABLISH A DEFAULT PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTIES

*Establish the IPMC 2012 (current version: 2024) as the **default** property maintenance code for non-owner-occupied residential rental properties. Cities can adopt other standards if they choose, but no Kansas family should be left without basic habitability protections.*

The KRLTA guarantees safe, habitable housing. K.S.A. 58-2553(a)(1) states: the landlord shall “comply with the requirements of applicable building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety.” However, **Kansas is one of two states that hasn’t adopted default codes.** So, in cities and counties without a property maintenance code, landlords are not held to a standard.

CLARIFY THAT KS CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT (KCPA) APPLIES TO LANDLORD TENANT CASES

Make clear that the KCPA, K.S.A. 50-636, does apply to cases arising from the KRLTA through a private right of action. 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. 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.

STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS AGAINST RETALIATION

Amend K.S.A. 58-2572 to create a presumption of retaliation, like Kentucky.¹¹

This gives renters the ability to report unsafe conditions without fear of losing their housing. Landlords retain rights to raise rents as a general increase or evict for valid cause, like failure to pay rent. This balances accountability and protects safe housing.

CREATE TRANSPARENT PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Require annual registration with Secretary of State for non-owner occupied residential rental properties. Registration fee waived for housing authorities, nonprofits, and LIHTC or income-based properties. The registry would list the owner, property name(s), addresses and number units, local registered agent, contact and any inspection results or code violations. A fine would be assessed for failure to register.

Kansas requires transparency for childcare providers, restaurants, and even pet shelters—but not for rental housing. **Kansans deserve the same transparency when it comes to their homes.** Landlords know much about renters through applications and screening fees, yet renters know little about their landlords. A registry rewards responsible landlords, helps cities and counties enforce safety standards,⁸ and prevents corporate owners from hiding behind shell companies or evading service of code violations like in Emery Gardens.⁹ Clear accountability protects property values and community stability.

CLARIFY AUTHORITY FOR RENTAL INSPECTIONS

Clarify K.S.A. 12,16-138 to allow for interior inspections with tenant consent, with an administrative warrant, or with reasonable notice and where there is probable cause that imminent danger 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 increases, if they request or consent to an inspection.** Under the current law, cities obtain tenant consent to do an inspection, but if the tenant moves or is forced out, then the city has lost the ability to require remediation.¹⁰ Fixing this gap in the law will provide clarity to cities and protect the health and safety of Kansans.



2: SECURING STABLE HOUSING FOR KANSANS

PROVIDE DUE PROCESS FOR EVICTIONS (HB 2357)

Kansas is tied for 3rd fastest in the U.S. for evictions.¹² Yet, eviction filings are permanent in Kansas, even if dismissed, mistaken, or satisfied; there is no expungement. When evaluating rental applications, landlords rely on tenant screening company reports, which use eviction filings as a key reason to disqualify Kansans for housing.

HB 2357 provides eviction filings remained sealed until judgment for the plaintiff, **protecting Kansans from wrongful harm**. It encourages mediation, as in other civil cases, and allows expungement two years after judgment is satisfied, including any money owed, if no new cases are filed. This balances accountability with the presumption of innocence—a core Kansas and American value.

COUNT INCOME FOR VETERANS AND KANSANS: OPERATION SECURE HOMES

Veterans, seniors, and working Kansans deserve fair treatment when applying for housing. Large corporate owners use online applications and payment portals that don't consider types of income other than wages and reject partial payments.

This change requires landlords to consider all lawful income—wages, VA benefits, SSI/SSDI, retirement, child support, or public assistance—when applying the “3x rent” standard for income. It also ensures landlords accept partial payments, including from charities or family, just as banks do with mortgages.¹³

Landlords retain the right to evict and collect full balances owed,¹⁴ but **Kansans gain greater housing stability and avoid compounding debt** when they try to pay. This honors personal responsibility, strengthens families, and respects those who served our country.

3: ENSURING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS & COMMUNITIES

ADDRESSING CONDEMNED RENTAL PROPERTIES

Condemned apartments and townhomes eliminate needed housing, drive blight, and burden taxpayers. This ensures accountability for owners, renters, and the community.

Ownership: condemned properties are forfeited to the local government or fines assessed equaling the cost of repair to habitability or teardown (if not fixable).

Relocation: renters receive relocation support—return of deposits plus prorated rent through the end of their lease (up to two years). This is proportionate to renter obligations if s/he breaks a lease.

DETERING CRIMINAL NEGLECT OF RENTAL PROPERTY

In extreme cases of repeated violations, current penalties are too weak to deter neglect. A new “criminal neglect” standard allows fines up to \$25,000 per unit for 3 violations arising from related issues within 18 months, with escalating penalties if repairs are ignored. This targets only bad actors, empowers cities to act against repeat offenders, and prevents unsafe properties from dragging down neighborhoods and community safety.

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:

Christina Ashie Guidry, Director of Policy & Planning, UCS of Johnson County, christinag@ucsjoco.org
Myranda Agnew, Regional Coordinator, Kansas State Homeless Coalition, magnew@kshomeless.com

Sponsoring legislators for these bills: Sen. Doug Shane, Rep. Leah Howell, and Rep. Cyndi Howerton

NOTES

¹Alex 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>.

²"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/>.

³LISC 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/>.

⁴Jonathan Ketzel, "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/>.

⁵Matthew 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/>.

⁶"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/>.

⁷Jocelyn 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.

⁸Celia Hack, "The city of Wichita can fine landlords who don't take care of their properties. It rarely does," KMWU, April 2, 2025, <https://kmwu.org/2025-04-02/wichita-can-fine-landlords-who-dont-take-care-of-their-properties-it-rarely-does>.

⁹Pilar Pedraza, "Search for owners of Wichita apartments with poor living conditions comes up empty," KAKE, April 17, 2023, updated Nov. 22, 2024, https://kake.com/archive/stories/search-for-owners-of-wichita-apartments-with-poor-living-conditions-comes-up-empty/article_51ee1a5d-d709-5489-a902-67a26921664d.html.

¹⁰Celia Hack, "The city of Wichita can fine landlords who don't take care of their properties. It rarely does," KMWU, April 2, 2025, <https://kmwu.org/2025-04-02/wichita-can-fine-landlords-who-dont-take-care-of-their-properties-it-rarely-does>.

¹¹Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Sec. 383.705 Retaliatory conduct.

¹²Michael 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/>.

¹³K.S.A. Sec. 84-3-603. Tender of payment. ¹⁴K.S.A. Sec. 58-2566. Acceptance of late rent; effect.

¹⁵Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Sec. 383.635 Remedies for noncompliance that affects health and safety.

¹⁶Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Sec. 118A.355 Failure of landlord to maintain dwelling unit in habitable condition.

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